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HISTORY OF THE
STONE COMPANIES,
ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL
CORPS (VOLUNTEERS).



FREDERICK J. WOOD.

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THE LATE SURGEON-LIEUT.-COL. MONCKTON, M.D., V.D.

THE HISTORY OF THE MAIDSTONE
COMPANIES, ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL
CORPS (VOLUNTEERS).

With 28 Illustrations.

By
FREDERICK J. WOOD,
Corporal, Maidstone Cos.,
R.A.M.C. (Vols.)

Maidstone:
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PREFACE.

FOR some few years it has been felt that a history of the formation and progress of the Maidstone Companies of the Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers) would be of interest both to the more intimate friends of the corps and to the public generally, especially if it included some account of the various duties undertaken by the members during the South African campaign.

But widely as this feeling prevailed, there seemed to be some difficulty in carrying it into effect until Colonel Cantlie, Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant of these Companies, generously offered valuable prizes to any member who should write the most complete and accurate account of the work—civil and military—undertaken since the formation of the Companies down to the present time.

I have great pleasure in stating that the offer thus kindly made by Colonel Cantlie has resulted in the most interesting and reliable history by Corporal Wood, now placed before the public in the following pages.

Let me add that the Companies will in a few months' time complete the twenty-first year of their existence, and there is reason to believe that it will not be long before they will be entrusted with still heavier responsibilities in times of national danger. Under these circumstances, I venture to think the present is a most appropriate time for publishing some record of the work already done by a body which, starting as a small organisation of ardent Volunteers in Maidstone, has developed to a considerable extent by the formation of detachments in other parts of the county, notably at Canterbury and Margate, and seems destined, according to the Army scheme now before Parliament, to take rank as an integral part of one great National Army.

C. PYE OLIVER,

Major,


Commanding Maidstone Cos.,

R.A.M.C. (Vols.)

April, 1907.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

 O all who have in any way helped in the production of this volume, either by means of information, or loan of photographs, etc., the compiler extends his hearty and grateful thanks, not only for their kind assistance, but for the invariable kindness and courtesy with which his requests for information were received. Where so many have helped it would be invidious to make distinctions, but special thanks are due to Major C. Pye Oliver and Ex-Sergeant-Major G. Fowler for kindly reading through the proof sheets in order that the history might be as authentic as possible, they being specially qualified by their long and intimate connection with the Companies for this work.

Much of the information has been obtained from official letters and records at headquarters, by permission of the Commanding Officer, and also to some extent from press reports, but most of the later events came within the compiler's own experience. The information contained in the South African history was obtained by means of interviews with the active service members.

Every effort has been made to make the history as complete as possible, and that its perusal may prove a source of pleasure to past, present, and future members of the Companies, and all interested in their work, is the sincere wish of

F.J.W.

April, 1907.

**The Maidstone Companies,
Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers).**

FOUNDED - - - 1886.

Headquarters :

THE OLD PALACE, MAIDSTONE.

Detachments :

CANTERBURY, MARGATE, AND SNODLAND.

Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant :

COLONEL JAMES CANTLIE, V.D.

Commanding Officer :

MAJOR C. PYE OLIVER, M.D.

Company Officers :

CAPTAIN J. M. ROGERS-TILLSTONE.

LIEUTENANT J. ALDINGTON GIBB, M.B.

LIEUTENANT A. R. HENCHLEY, M.D.

LIEUTENANT J. WARD.

LIEUTENANT P. C. BURGESS.

LIEUTENANT W. H. FLINT.

Quartermasters :

LIEUTENANT B. DALBY HOBSON.

LIEUTENANT G. E. BARFORD.

Acting-Chaplains :

REV. C. G. DUFFIELD, M.A.

REV. E. D. FINCH-SMITH, B.A.

REV. J. LE MARE SHALLIS.

Instructor :

STAFF-SERGEANT E. J. HARRIS, R.A.M.C.

AND

263 Non-commissioned Officers and Men.

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Photo by]

[Frank W. Fielder.

THE COMMANDING OFFICER,
MAJOR CHARLES PYE OLIVER, M.D.



THE
HISTORY OF THE MAIDSTONE COMPANIES
ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
(VOLUNTEERS).

Part 1.

THE FORMATION AND WORK OF THE COMPANIES
FROM 1885 TO 1906.

IN the early eighties, the problem of how to improve the inadequate ambulance arrangements for our Volunteer Army in time of war occupied the minds of many friends of the Volunteer movement. Foremost among these was Surgeon-Major Evatt, M.D., Medical Staff, who chiefly devoted his energies to advocating the formation of Divisions of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps. In June, 1885, Surgeon-Major Evatt addressed a meeting of Volunteer Medical Officers on the subject, at Liverpool. Among those present on that occasion was Surgeon-Major D. H. Monckton, of Maidstone, who then determined that, if possible, a Division of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps should shortly exist in that town. Surgeon-Major Monckton was at this time Superintendent of the Maidstone St. John Ambulance Corps, and in this he saw the nucleus of the projected Division.

In May, 1886, under the auspices of **The First Steps.** the Maidstone St. John Ambulance Corps, a lecture was given by Surgeon-Major Evatt, M.D., at the Town Hall, Maidstone, on "The Ambulance and Field Organisation of an Army." A large and distinguished audience was present, including Brigade-Surgeon Hulseberg, Medical Officer, Maidstone Regimental Depot. In the course of his lecture, Surgeon-Major Evatt said that since the Crimean campaign constant developments had taken place in the medical service of the Army. The tendency had all along been to make the medical service more independent and self-contained ; more completely responsible for its own work. Three elements constituted the medical service of the Army, viz.:—The officers, or Medical Staff ; the non-commissioned officers and men, or Medical Staff Corps, who furnished the wardmasters, nursing orderlies, compounders, storekeepers, clerks, etc. ; and the nursing sisters. For ambulance aid to the wounded on the field there was the surgeon and sixteen men from each battalion, who were trained in times of peace in ambulance instruction and first-aid drill, and these men had eight stretchers, one per company, given them ; and in action they, with the battalion surgeon, afforded the first-aid to the wounded as they fell on the battle-field. From the bearer company dressing station, or ambulance hospital, the wounded were transferred to the field hospitals. They were then conveyed to the base hospitals, and thence by regularly equipped ships to Netley or Woolwich Hospitals. This, roughly, was the position in the regular Army ; but how was it with the Volunteers ? They had at that time in England a quarter of a million

Volunteers ; but their ambulance arrangements were very imperfect, indeed practically non-existent. It was necessary to develop these by raising a Volunteer Medical Staff Corps to supplement the existing regimental surgeons and ambulance men, and to provide bearer companies and field hospitals for the Volunteer forces. Mr. James Cantlie, of Charing Cross Hospital, had raised a company of medical Volunteers, and Edinburgh had also started a corps.

**The objects of
the proposed
Division.**

Surgeon-Major Monckton, after calling attention to Surgeon-Major Evatt's great interest in ambulance work, both in the Army and amongst civilians, asked those present how they supposed they could best thank him. Undoubtedly, if asked, he would say at once, by promoting the organisation of a unit of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps in Maidstone, which, he said, was the headquarters of a regimental district for two battalions of the line, two battalions of Militia, and two Volunteer battalions. Each of these had its regimental surgeons, and its regimental bearers for rendering first-aid at the front, but there was nothing behind them ; what was wanted was a reserve bearer company, ready trained, to be attached to it in time of war, consisting, according to the regulations of the Medical Staff Corps, of one surgeon-major in command, two surgeons, one quartermaster, one quartermaster-sergeant, six staff-sergeants and sergeants, six corporals, forty-eight privates, and one bugler. I am happy, said Surgeon-Major Monckton, to inform you that the nucleus of this bearer company for Maidstone is already formed. I will produce it—Men of the Maidstone Ambulance Corps,

“Fall in”—“Attention”—there it is!—“Stand at ease”—“Sit easy.” When, in June last, an Ambulance Corps for this town was formed, and I was chosen its first Superintendent, I did not intend that it should remain an ambulance corps for civil service only. Nowhere is there better material for a Medical Staff Corps, and we are especially fortunate in having drill instructors of exceptional ability in Inspector Waghorn and Sergeant Gilbert. It is intended shortly to form another ambulance class for men, with the special object of qualifying them for this ambulance corps, which, when enrolled, uniformed and equipped, may form at once a civil ambulance corps for daily service in times of peace, and a reserve Medical Staff Corps to back up and aid our citizen army should its presence on the field of war unhappily be required. In proposing now that the thanks of this meeting be given to Surgeon-Major Evatt, I should like to add this rider: “That it is desirable that effect should be given to his recommendations by the immediate formation in Maidstone of a Volunteer Medical Staff Corps.”—This resolution having been seconded by Brigade-Surgeon Hulseberg, was carried by acclamation.

At a meeting held at the residence of Surgeon-Major Monckton, on July 20th, 1886, it was definitely decided to endeavour to form a Division of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps in Maidstone, and also to inaugurate a local branch of the Kent Volunteer Medical Association to promote the formation of the Division and raise the necessary funds (£350). The Right Hon. Viscount Hardinge was appointed President; Major Haynes, Chairman; Surgeon-Major Monckton, Hon. Secretary; and Mr. W. J.

Saveall, Assistant-Secretary. Among those present at this meeting was Dr. Stephenson, commanding the Woolwich Division, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, who afterwards inspected a number of men who were willing to join the Division, if formed. Dr. Stephenson also explained the conditions under which the men would serve.

**The
First Officers of
the Division.**

The requisite number of officers and men having been obtained, application for the recognition and authorisation of the Division was forwarded to the Secretary of State for War through the Principal Medical Officer and the General Commanding at Dover, on September 24th, 1886. The application was accompanied by a list of the proposed officers and the men enrolled. The first officers of the Division were Surgeon-Major D. H. Monckton, M.D. (in command), Surgeons H. Barham and H. Bennett, and Quartermaster Sandland, while Mr. H. H. Monckton was attached as supernumerary officer and cadet. Mr. W. J. Saveall was appointed quartermaster-sergeant. Sixty-six men signed the roll sent to the War Office. First-class Staff-sergeant G. Fowler, of Fort Pitt Hospital, Chatham (who was afterwards appointed as permanent instructor to the Division), gave the initial instruction in stretcher and other ambulance drill. Lectures were also given by the officers, the drills being held at the drill shed in Week Street. The terms under which the men enlisted were :— Entrance fee, ten shillings ; annual subscription, ten shillings ; uniform free ; in all other respects the conditions were similar to those prevailing in other Volunteer corps.

In November, 1886, subscriptions and donations to the amount of nearly £200 having been received, the committee of the Kent Volunteer Medical Association and the officers of the Division considered that they would be justified in putting the men into uniform forthwith, for, although the Division was not yet officially sanctioned, it was understood that the application had been received with approval, and that official sanction would be received, after the passing of the Army estimates, in the following April.

Although subscriptions were coming in so readily, the members believed in **Early signs of vitality.** helping themselves as far as possible, and accordingly, with the assistance of non-commissioned officers and men of other corps, they carried out an assault-at-arms at the Corn Exchange, Maidstone, on December, 1st, 1886, in aid of the funds of the Division. The affair proved a great success. There were sixteen events in the programme, the most interesting, perhaps, being the exhibition of first-aid and stretcher work by members of the corps. The members attended this function attired for the first time in uniform.

The Division **The Division officially sanctioned.** The approval of the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief for the formation of the 5th Division Volunteer Medical Staff Corps in Maidstone was received at the end of March, 1887. The letter stated that the Division should be organised as an independent unit, subordinate to the military and medical authorities of the District, and was attached to the South-Eastern District, the headquarters of which were then at Chatham.



EX-SERGT.-MAJOR G. FOWLER.

The whole of the original members of the Division took the oath of allegiance in April, 1887, Quartermaster-sergeant Saveall being "No. 1" on the roll.

On Easter Monday, 1887, the Division had its first experience of field-work, taking part, in conjunction with the West Kent Volunteers, in a sham-fight at Thurnham Castle.

The Jubilee Review, Aldershot, 1887. Very early in its career the Division was the object of official favour, for, on July 9th, 1887, only three months after its sanction, it took part in the Royal Review at Aldershot on the occasion of the Jubilee of her late Majesty, Queen Victoria. The members of the Corps left Maidstone on Friday evening for the Review on Saturday. After the march-past, the officer in command of the whole of the Medical Staff Corps complimented Surgeon-Major Monckton on the steadiness and general good appearance of his men. The Division arrived at Maidstone about two o'clock on Sunday morning, and previous to the dismissal the Commanding officer addressed them on the station platform, expressing his high gratification at their conduct during the review, and saying he thought Maidstone ought to be proud of its Division taking part in a Royal Review at so early a stage of its existence.

The First Inspection. The first inspection of the Division took place in a meadow on Rocky Hill, the date being October 8th, 1887.

Surgeon-Major Monckton was in command, and the inspecting officer was Brigade-Surgeon Hulseberg, of the Maidstone Regimental Depôt, The usual routine was gone through, and the manner in

which the inspection was carried out is best expressed, perhaps, by the following divisional order :—" Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, 5th Division.—Divisional orders by Surgeon-Major Monckton, commanding. Headquarters, October 10th, 1887. The annual inspection.—The Commanding Officer has received the instructions of Brigade-Surgeon Hulseberg, the Inspecting Officer, to announce to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men, under his command, his entire satisfaction with the result of his inspection of the Division on Saturday the 8th inst. The Inspecting Officer was much pleased with the appearance and soldierly bearing of the men, the good line kept in the march-past, and the silence maintained in the ranks ; the accuracy of the movements gone through, and the skill manifested by the men in applying first field dressings. The Commanding Officer congratulates the Corps on obtaining so good a report on the occasion of its first inspection, and desires to express the pleasure it gave him to have so full a muster—four men only being absent out of eighty—and three of these with leave previously obtained. By order (signed) H. F. H. Barham, Surgeon and Acting-Adjutant."

On Good Friday, 1888, the Division
The Division at journeyed to Dover, to take part in the
Dover, 1888. Easter manœuvres and review of Volunteers. Leaving the Old Palace at 7.30 a.m., in full marching order, under the command of Surgeon-Major Monckton and Surgeon Bennett, they entrained at the South-Eastern Railway Station. On arriving at Dover, the men took up their quarters at the Boys' National School, Charlton. The Rector of

Charlton and his wife (a sister of Mr. Herbert Monckton, at that time Town Clerk of Maidstone), were very kind in looking after the comfort of the visitors, and also entertained the officers. On the first two days of the visit the Division was engaged in company and stretcher drill, and on Easter Monday took part in the general manœuvres.

On Friday, May 18th, 1888, Sergt.-Major George Fowler was presented with a handsome black marble clock, with bronze fittings, and a silver-mounted walking stick, as a mark of the members' appreciation of his untiring and devoted efforts as drill-instructor. The presentation took place at a concert, held at the Old Palace.

A Privates' Mess was formed in connection with the Division in May, 1888. This fact is worthy of mention, as this institution has had much to do with the popularity of the Corps among the young men of the town, providing as it does a means of social intercourse and recreation for the members.

The annual inspection of 1888 was held at Vinters Park, Maidstone, on Saturday, August 18th. The whole of the officers and 81 non-commissioned officers and men were present, under the command of Surgeon-Major Monckton. The Inspecting Officer was Surgeon-Major Joynt. The various branches of the corps work having been gone through, the Inspecting Officer expressed his complete satisfaction with all he had seen.

On Easter Monday, 1889, the Division
1889. took part in a sham-fight at Wrotham,
accompanying the A and B Companies
Rifle Volunteers. The new drum and fife band, which
had been raised in connection with the Division by
Drum-Major Mason and Corporal Risch, appeared on
this occasion for the first time in public.

The Division furnished a guard of honour to H.R.H.
Princess Louise at the West Kent Hospital, on the
occasion of the opening of the Hollingworth Memorial
Building. Surgeon-Major Monckton had the honour of
being presented to Her Royal Highness and to the
Marquis of Lorne by Earl Amherst.

Surgeon H. Bennett, one of the original officers of
the Division, resigned his commission on July 22nd, 1889.

The Division, under Surgeon-Major
The Aldershot Monckton, encamped for a week at
Review, 1889. Aldershot, in August, 1889. On the
Wednesday they had the honour to
take part in a grand Review held by the German Emperor
and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

The 1889 inspection was held in Vinters Park, Maid-
stone, by kind permission of Mrs. Whatman. After the
inspection, the Inspecting Officer, Surgeon-Major Shaw,
complimented the men on their proficiency, which, he said,
indicated careful instruction, and patient and diligent
attention on their part. A series of athletic events after-
wards took place, the proceeds of the day being given
to the recreation fund of the Division.

Two members of the Corps, Sergeant-Major G. Fowler and the late Sergeant F. Brennan, were awarded Diplomas of Merit at the Royal Military Exhibition, held in London, for an improved cooking apparatus, suitable for carrying hospital diets and rations, and a large trophy of crest and badge of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, respectively. This trophy was recently renovated and the lettering brought up-to-date by Mr. J. Brennan, a brother of Sergeant Brennan. An illustration in a later part of this volume shows it as it now hangs, between the two flags taken by members of the Corps to South Africa, on the wall of the Monckton Drill Hall.

The Division marched to Chatham on
1890. Maundy Thursday, 1890, where, by permission of the Senior Medical Officer, they took up quarters at Fort Pitt Hospital, remaining there until Easter Monday. During this time arrangements were made for the men to visit the wards of the Hospital, seeing the patients under treatment and getting practical instruction in nursing and other duties of a military hospital. The annual inspection was held on Easter Monday morning, and the men marched back to Maidstone in the afternoon.

Lieutenant and Quartermaster Sandland resigned early in 1890, after having been with the Division since its formation. His services to the Division in its early days were of very great value, and it was largely owing to his help that the band was formed, he presenting it with the first bass drum and several bugles. To fill the vacancy the name of Quartermaster-Sergeant Saveall was submitted to the War Office authorities and accepted,

he being duly commissioned on May 3rd, 1890. This was a well-deserved reward for Quartermaster-sergeant Saveall's devotion to the interests of the Division from its earliest days.

The Rev. Herbert A. Watson, headmaster of the Maidstone Grammar School, was gazetted to a commission as Chaplain, on December 13th, 1890.

Surgeon Grant having resigned his
1891. commission on leaving Maidstone,
Charles Pye Oliver, Esq., M.B., was
gazetted Acting-Surgeon of the Division on January
3rd, 1891.

At the request of the Commanding Officer, the Director-General of the Army Medical Staff appointed Surgeon P. A. Whiston, Medical Staff, Adjutant of the Division.

The inspection of 1891 was held at Vinters Park, by Sir W. Guyer Hunter, M.D., K.C.M.G., M.P., who expressed his satisfaction with the work done. The inspection was followed by competitions and sports.

The camp was held at Chatham, facilities again being granted by the medical authorities for practical instruction in nursing and other hospital duties.

The official title of the Division was
Alteration of title, 1892. altered in 1892, it being no longer
known as the 5th Division, but the
Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical
Staff Corps. The crest of the Corps was also altered.



Photo by

[De' Ath & Dunk.

HEADQUARTERS: THE OLD PALACE, MAIDSTONE.

The Company encamped at Netley in August, 1892, when opportunities were afforded for instruction in Corps work in the wards of the Royal Victoria Hospital. A number of the men were permitted to attend the operating theatre and witness surgical operations. Permission was also given to the members to visit the Hospital Museum. The officers present were Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel Monckton and Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver. During the week the Company was inspected by Surgeon-Major-General G. S. Hinde, who reported very favourably on the work of the men.

The annual inspection was held in the Lock Meadows, Maidstone, on August 24th, the Inspecting Officer being Surgeon-Major Power, who expressed his satisfaction with the appearance of the Company, especially remarking on the satisfactory character of the clothing and equipment. After the inspection, an exhibition of physical drill and an entertainment were given in the grounds of the Old Palace, under Sergeant-Major G. Fowler, the proceeds being in aid of the building fund of a proposed drill hall, of which the Company stood in great need.

In April, 1893, Surgeon-Lieutenant Colonel Evatt again visited Maidstone, under the auspices of the Company, and gave a lecture at the Town Hall on "Ambulance Organisation in War—its aims and methods of work." Surgeon-Lieutenant Colonel Evatt had just returned from service in Egypt and India, and in the course of his lecture remarked that it was not often in this world that one's hopes and dreams came true, and

**Another lecture
by Surg.-Lieut.-
Col. Evatt.**

it had therefore given him great satisfaction to come back to Maidstone, after six years in India, and see such a splendid result of the few words he had spoken in favour of the formation of the Company. He further appealed to the Maidstone Company to endeavour to obtain the full equipment of a bearer company.

The Company again encamped at Netley in 1893, numbering 120. The feature of the camp was Sergeant-Major Fowler's patent camp kitchen, which was used in camp for the first time, and gave complete satisfaction.

The annual inspection was held in Monckton's Meadow, London Road, Maidstone, on August 23rd, 1893. The inspection was again carried out by Surgeon-Major Power, who reported favourably on the day's work.

Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel Monckton, **Surg.-Lieut.-Col. Monckton, V.D.,** resigned his commission on **resigns, 1894.** January 6th, 1894, in consequence of advancing years. As the founder and first Commanding Officer of the Company, Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel Monckton worked with untiring zeal for the good of the Corps, and great regret was felt among all ranks when he severed his official connection with it. The vacant position of Commanding Officer was taken by Surgeon-Captain H. F. H. Barham.

Lieutenant-Colonel Tomlinson inspected the Company at Mote Park, Maidstone, on July 12th, 1894. The officers present were Surgeon-Captains H. F. H. Barham and C. Pye Oliver. The Inspecting Officer expressed himself as highly pleased with the way the men paraded.

The 1894 camp was held at Aldershot, the Company being under the command of Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver. The Company was associated for the week with the London Companies, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, and encamped on Redan Hill, near the Cambridge Hospital.

The Transport Section formed, 1895. Previous to 1895 the transport arrangements of the Company had been very meagre, the only articles allowed by Government consisting of an ambulance wagon, pack saddle, litters, and cacolets.

No official allowance was made for horsing these, but owing to the kindness of brewery and other firms of the town, horses were never wanting when required. In April, 1895, however, the following letter was received by the Commanding Officer, which led to a complete revolution in the transport arrangements of the Company, and the formation of a Transport Section as a distinct part:—
 “ War Office, 27th April, 1895. Sir,—I have the honour, by the desire of H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief, to acquaint you that a proposal is under consideration to make Volunteer Bearer Companies, eleven in number, which are allotted to the Field Army, independent of the Army Service Corps, as regards drivers and horses, in fact, to render each of these medical units complete *per se*. As a tentative measure, however, it has been decided to select two Companies, one Metropolitan and one Provincial, in order to test the working of the proposed change, and in connection therewith I am to inform you that the 1st Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, in your command has been chosen as one

of the two corps. In order to carry out the scheme it is proposed : (A) To increase the establishment of each Company by thirty-seven men (*vide* Field Army Establishments Home Defence, page 133 for Transport), (B) To supply for instructional purposes two ambulance wagons and the necessary harness and equipment from the mobilisation equipment, which in this instance is stored in Maidstone, (c) To allot a definite sum per annum to each Company to cover the cost of horsing the two ambulance wagons at least four times in the year and for other incidental expenses, (D) There are several other points, such as questions of storage and certificates of proficiency as regards driving which can be settled hereafter ; the foregoing, however, are the main points of the scheme, but broadly speaking the terms under which the allowance will be issued will be the same as those laid down in paras. 590 and 591 Volunteer Regulations. We therefore request that you will be good enough to communicate with the O.C. the above Company and obtain his views and co-operation on the subject, submitting the result to this office as soon as may be convenient. . . . I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant (signed) W. A. Mackinnon, D.G." The selection of the Maidstone Company as the only provincial Company to endeavour to carry out this experiment was regarded as a great compliment to the members, and steps were at once taken to give effect to the proposals contained in the above letter. The Transport Section was inaugurated on the lines laid down, and proved such a success that all the remaining Companies of Volunteer Medical Staff Corps in the United Kingdom

have since been permitted to act similarly. Upon the authorisation of a second Company, the Transport Section was increased to seventy-eight non-commissioned officers and men, having in charge, on mobilisation, 115 horses, ten ambulance wagons, and sixteen other vehicles.

The annual inspection took place on July 31st, 1895, by Brigade - Surgeon - Lieutenant - Colonel Williamson, Senior Medical Officer at Fort Pitt, Chatham. The inspection was held at Mote Park, Maidstone, and passed off in a satisfactory manner.

The Company again encamped at Netley in 1895, and, the weather being fine, a most instructive week was spent.

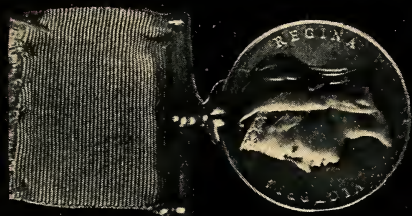
Death of Surg.-Lieut.-Col. Monckton, V.D. It was with deep regret that, in March, 1896, the members of the Company heard of the death of Surgeon-Lieut.-Colonel D. H. Monckton, V.D., its founder and first Commanding Officer. The immediate cause of death was cerebral hæmorrhage, but he had been in failing health for some considerable time. The Company was well represented at the funeral, the body being borne to the grave by non-commissioned officers of the Corps, and on every side there was evidence of the genuine respect in which the deceased gentleman was held.

Surgeon-Captain Chas. Pye Oliver assumes Command, 1896. Surgeon-Captain H. F. H. Barham, the Commanding Officer of the Company, resigned his commission on June 24th, 1896, his place being taken by Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver, who has held the appointment with great success to the present time.

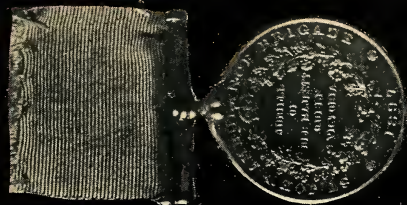
The 1896 camp was held at Gosport, the newly-formed transport section accompanying the corps for the first time, and gained much practical experience in riding and driving, being attached to the Army Service Corps for the week.

The annual inspection was held in August, the Company being under the command of Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver. The Inspecting Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Williamson, congratulated the Commanding Officer on the work of his men, especially referring to the mounted branch.

The Diamond Jubilee of her late Majesty Queen Victoria occurred in June, 1897, and the Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps had the honour to be on duty in London on the occasion of the Royal Procession through the principal streets of the Metropolis in celebration of the event. The Company, numbering about ninety, under the command of Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver, left Maidstone in the early hours of the morning, arriving at Victoria Station just after six o'clock. Having been provided with breakfast by Messrs. Fremlin Brothers, of Maidstone, at their premises in Buckingham Palace Road, the Company took up its position on the line of route, stretcher squads being placed at intervals from Westminster Bridge to Whitehall Place and the Horse Guards. During the day they rendered first-aid in no less than 153 cases, several of which were of a somewhat serious nature. All of the members, however, had an excellent view of the Procession, and thoroughly enjoyed the day's outing.



OBVERSE.



REVERSE.

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL.

The Commanding Officer, Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver, received the Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Medal, in recognition of the services rendered by the Company on this auspicious and historic occasion. Medals were also awarded to twenty-eight non-commissioned officers and men of the Company who held St. John Ambulance certificates. This honour, however, was only conferred after much correspondence with the Secretary of State for War, and the successful result was largely owing to the good offices of F. S. W. Cornwallis, Esq., who at that time represented Maidstone in Parliament, and directed a question to the Home Secretary on the subject. The following non-commissioned officers and men were present at the Procession and received the medal, a reproduction of which is shown opposite this page:—Quartermaster - sergeant T. W. A. Neech; Second-class Staff-Sergeant C. Murray; Sergeants A. E. Spiers, E. W. Moon, A. R. Capon; Lance-sergeants F. G. May, E. Weller; Corporals H. H. J. Clark, S. A. Russell, F. A. Fenwick, H. D. Usmar, H. E. Batchelor, W. Boardman, A. R. Mummary; Lance-Corporal E. J. Adams; Privates D. Fryer, G. R. Elbourn, T. H. Carpenter, H. Hoad, H. C. Okill, A. R. Kemp, H. R. French, A. E. Standen, W. Weller, J. G. Pickard, H. W. Rumbelow; Driver H. Gammon; Bugler R. Thrush. The following non-commissioned officers and men were also present:—Sergeant-Major G. Fowler; Second-class Staff-sergeants E. J. Viggers, R. D. Frost; Corporals E. B. Coppen, W. J. McCabe; Lance-corporals H. Johnson, G. E. Sunnuck, V. S. Pickford; Privates H. M. Pearson, F. W. Norris, C. Brunger, T. Gardiner,

E. C. Goodwin, A. Lawson, A. McKeough, C. Fagg, A. R. Down, A. J. Shoebridge, W. W. Weeden, B. H. Bailey, H. R. Barnard, H. J. Ford, P. Puttock, W. Samson, E. Norris, F. H. Walker, W. H. Gilbert, A. Hart, F. W. Judges, A. Daw, A. W. Stockwell, R. E. Bennett, W. C. H. Ward, F. T. Down, G. Featherby, E. Stevens, H. J. Young, B. J. Biggs, L. W. Law, C. H. Vidler, G. Pearce, H. E. Latter, E. Watts, J. H. Neech, W. Ellis, G. Loder, A. Tucker, W. Hale, C. Lucas, A. Watts; Drivers F. Burgess, A. J. Barnes, H. T. Hartwell, E. Wood, F. Cook, J. C. Roots, A. F. Colvin; Bugler R. A. Wilson.

In August, 1897, the Company encamped for a week at Shorncliffe, the Maidstone Rifle Volunteers being there at the same time. The greater part of the week was spent in field-work, and much useful practice was obtained.

The annual inspection was carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel Fergusson, at Maidstone, who reported favourably on the work of the Company.

**The Typhoid
Epidemic.**

In the autumn of 1897 the terrible epidemic of typhoid fever occurred in Maidstone, and the part taken by the men of the Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, in alleviating the sufferings of the stricken people forms one of the brightest pages in the history of the Corps. As soon as the epidemic became serious a meeting of the Company was called, and almost the whole of the members volunteered for duty. To facilitate arrangements the town was divided

into two districts, under the superintendence of Quartermaster-sergeant T. W. A. Neech and Staff-sergeant W. H. Baker respectively, the whole being under Sergeant-Major G. Fowler, who also had charge, for three months, of a relief kitchen in Milton Street, from which quantities of beef tea, chicken broth, wines, and other medical comforts were issued. Upon receipt of any request for help, the quartermaster-sergeant in charge of the district in which the patient resided was instructed to tell off one or two of the available men, accompany them to the house and leave them there on duty. The preliminaries having been settled, Sergeant-Major Fowler sent a copy of the following letter to all of the clergy and medical men of the town:—"Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps. Headquarters, Old Palace, Maidstone, 29th September, 1897. Sir,—Should you know of any house where a volunteer male nurse is urgently required for night duty, either to assist or take entire charge of a male patient, please send the name and address of the sufferer to me any day during the epidemic, before ten p.m., when, if possible, one or two men will be supplied. I am, sir, your obedient servant, Geo. Fowler, Sergeant-Major." From the date of the publication of this letter applications for help were incessant, the average number of male nurses on duty nightly for nearly four months being sixteen, and on one occasion there were no less than thirty thus occupied at one time. As a souvenir of their voluntary service the members of the Corps who had taken part in this heroic work received at the hands of F. S. W. Cornwallis, Esq., a much-prized silver medal, a fac simile of

which is shown opposite this page. These were provided by the Corporation of Maidstone, and bore the inscription :—" With gratitude for loving services, 1897." The presentation took place at the Town Hall, Maidstone, on October 12th, 1898, and during the evening the Mayor (Councillor J. Barker), thanked the members of the Company, on behalf of the people of Maidstone, for their self-denying and Christian work. The Deputy-Mayor, Alderman J. Oliver, who had held the office of Mayor during the year of the epidemic, also addressed the men, complimenting them on the brave and devoted spirit they had displayed, as night after night, regardless of the danger of infection, they went from house to house, tending the sick and dying, and striving to check the course of the terrible calamity which had befallen the town. Special mention was made of the energy and zeal of Sergeant-Major Fowler. The names of the non-commissioned officers and men who received the Corporation medal were :—Sergeant-Major G. Fowler ; Quarter-master-sergeant T. W. A. Neech ; Staff-sergeants W. H. Baker, R. D. Frost, C. Murray, E. J. Viggers ; Sergeants A. Clement, A. E. Capon ; Drum-Major A. Mason ; Lance-sergeant W. J. McCabe ; Corporals S. A. Russell, H. D. Usmar, F. A. Fenwick, E. B. Coppen, G. H. Fryer, H. E. Batchelor, H. H. J. Clark, G. E. Sunnuck, V. S. Pickford ; Lance-corporals H. C. Okill, J. T. Pickard, H. F. Hartwell ; Privates C. Fagg, J. B. Biggs, W. Samson, G. Loder, S. S. Collins, H. E. Latter, A. F. Colvin, A. Daw, H. Hoad, D. Fryer ; Drivers J. C. Roots, W. C. H. Ward, E. Milliner, C. A. Lambert, F. Cook, G. A. Lambert, W. Smith, H. Gammon.



OBVERSE



REVERSE

MAIDSTONE TYPHOID EPIDEMIC MEDAL.

1898. The Rev. H. A. Watson, M.A., Chaplain to the Corps, on leaving Maidstone, retired in 1898, and was succeeded by the Rev. C. G. Duffield, M.A., who has always taken the keenest interest in the work of the Corps.

The 1898 inspection took place at the Lock Meadows, Maidstone, Brigade-Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel Fergusson being the Inspecting Officer. There were 132 out of a possible 137 members on parade.

The camp was held at Shorncliffe, the greater portion of the week being taken up with field training.

1899. The 1899 inspection was also held at the Lock Meadows, Maidstone, by Colonel Clery. Only three men were absent, and after the drill, the Inspecting Officer said, speaking generally, he had seen nothing to equal the work of the Maidstone Company outside the headquarters at Aldershot and Woolwich.

The camp was held at Shorncliffe, in August, and during the week the Company was inspected by Major-General Hallam Parr.

The War in South Africa, 1899-1902. The crowning point in the history of the Company was reached in January, 1900, when a detachment was accepted for service in the South African War.

A letter was sent to the War Office offering the services of the men as early as September 25th, 1899, to which a courteous reply was received stating that it was not proposed to employ Volunteer

Medical Staff Corps as such for service in South Africa. The Secretary of State for War at the same time thanked the Company for its patriotic offer. A far different reply was received a few months later, and on February 16th, 1900, the first contingent, numbering fourteen, left Maidstone for Aldershot, there to be equipped for active service. These were followed in rapid succession by four other contingents, and at the end of five months the Company had no less than sixty-seven men at the front. The demand for Volunteers continued throughout the war, and finally the number of men sent out by the Maidstone Company reached a total of 150, or more than the authorised strength of the Company on the outbreak of the war. Some of these, however, at the later part of the war, came from other parts of the county, and as all traces of them were lost after leaving Maidstone no mention is made of them in the record of the work of the Company in South Africa. The men from the Maidstone Company were employed in various duties in Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Transvaal, Natal, Bechuanaland, Rhodesia, and Zululand, while one man was sent to Ceylon and another to Australia on trooping duty. Five of the above number, Corporal A. F. Colvin, Corporal N. S. Abbott, Private A. B. Reynolds, Private G. H. Crittenden, and Private C. Wag-horn, unfortunately sealed their devotion with their lives, and lie buried in a foreign land, thousands of miles from home and friends. The foregoing is but a brief summary of the work of the Company during the Boer War, as it is dealt with separately in the second part of this volume.

Drum-Major A. Mason resigned his position as band-master in April, 1900, up to which time the band had always maintained a high degree of efficiency. The vacant post was accepted by Corporal A. Hart. Under his able direction the band has continued to make steady progress, and is now one of the best drum and fife bands in the county. Corporal Hart was afterwards appointed drum-major.

The 1900 camp was held at Shorncliffe. It being a time of national emergency, the camp covered a period of four weeks in August, in order to give every member an opportunity to attend for a few days at least. Members attending for fourteen days or more were granted pay at Army rates. During the second week the annual inspection was held by Colonel H. Comerford, who expressed his satisfaction and complimented the Commanding Officer on the number of men the Company had sent to South Africa.

On October 29th, 1900, the Maidstone Company was again on duty in London, having been selected for ambulance duty on the line of route of the procession of City Imperial Volunteers on their return from the war in South Africa. Leaving Maidstone about eleven a.m., under the command of Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver, they reached the City at one o'clock, and at once proceeded to their appointed positions in Finsbury Pavement and Moorgate Street. The men had plenty of work during the day, casualties being frequent owing to the dense crowds of people. However, they had a very

**The Return of
the C.I.V.'s from
South Africa.**

interesting day, and after some refreshments had been partaken of, left Holborn Viaduct for home soon after ten o'clock, arriving at Maidstone about midnight.

Another distinguished honour was conferred upon the Company when, in **The Funeral of her late Majesty Queen Victoria.** February, 1901, they were invited to take part in the funeral arrangements of her late Majesty Queen Victoria, at Windsor, being the only provincial Company present in the Royal Borough on that memorable occasion. The contingent, ninety-eight strong, under the command of Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver, paraded at three o'clock in the morning, and left the South-Eastern Station at four. They reached Charing Cross at six a.m., and at once marched to the headquarters of the London Irish Rifles, in Duke Street, near the Strand. Breakfast having been partaken of, the Company marched to Waterloo Station and entrained, reaching Windsor about half-past nine. On arrival, the Company proceeded to Windsor Barracks to await orders from Colonel Cross, Principal Medical Officer. They were subsequently ordered to take charge of the whole of the ambulance arrangements for the military on the route of the procession from Windsor station to the entrance to St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Stretcher squads were placed at intervals, and three dressing stations formed. About fifty casualties were treated during the day, principally cases of fainting during the crush. The procession passed about two o'clock, and was probably one of the most impressive sights any member of the Corps had ever witnessed. After the procession, the Company was

almost immediately re-formed, and proceeded to the station to entrain for home. The Grenadier Guards had arranged to entertain the Company at Windsor Barracks, but had their invitation been accepted the men could not have reached Maidstone that night owing to the inconvenient service of trains. The Company finally arrived in Maidstone about ten o'clock, having been on duty nearly twenty hours. The following letter, which was received by the Commanding Officer and is now framed and hangs in the Sergeants' Mess at the Old Palace, is ample evidence that the work of the Company gave satisfaction to the military authorities at Windsor:—

“Cavalry Barracks, Windsor, February 4th, 1901. To Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps.—I beg to express, in the name of the General Commanding at Windsor on Saturday and myself, our appreciation of your services at the funeral of our late Queen. I also wish to thank you for your valuable assistance in carrying out the medical arrangements.—Yours faithfully, H. R. O. Cross, Surgeon-Lieut.-Colonel.”

The following officers, non-commissioned officers and men formed the Windsor contingent:—Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver (in command); Captain and Quartermaster W. J. Saveall; Sergeant-Major G. Fowler; First-Class Staff-sergeants W. H. Baker and R. D. Frost; Second-class Staff-sergeants E. J. Viggers and A. E. Spiers; Drum-Major A. Hart, Sergeants A. Clement, F. G. May, E. Weller, W. Boardman, J. C. Roots; Lance-sergeants H. D. Usmar and H. C. Okill; Corporals H. J. Young, H. Keeley, W. J. V. Samson, F. Loder, A. E. Peters, E. C. Goodwin, W. H. Sills, E. Baker,

J. H. Boardman; Privates F. L. Andrews; H. W. Aiston, W. J. Anderson, W. D. Baker, J. Bailey, C. Bailey, H. Barney, J. Berry, A. Bellingham, H. J. Buss, F. J. Bushnell, W. Buswood, E. Brooker, A. G. Chambers, L. H. Chapman, F. H. Church, H. J. Clayson, G. Cook, A. C. Cooper, G. A. Ditcher, A. Dolden, H. Dolden, O. J. Draycon, W. C. Edmonds, G. R. Elbourn, A. E. Farnham, H. R. French, H. S. Gates, F. C. Gates, G. T. Golds, C. Godfrey, S. C. J. Gowen, W. A. D. Gowen, T. Grimes, W. Hale, A. Harris, H. Hills, C. E. Jarrett, R. A. Kennett, C. L. Knight, P. G. Knight, L. W. Law, L. Langley, A. H. J. Lynn, H. Littlejohn, R. W. March, E. Martin, G. W. Mason, G. E. Maynard, H. Parker, H. M. Pearson, F. C. Pearson, J. Plackett, J. E. Purrott, H. R. Sallows, W. G. Sear, P. Songhurst, F. W. Startup, A. W. Stockwell, H. J. Swift, H. W. W. Thurlow, A. D. Tuff, H. J. Underdown, H. Walker, W. H. Weeden, F. H. White, F. White, B. F. Wicks, F. J. Wood, H. E. G. Wood, J. H. Woodward, A. W. Wright.

W. E. Fry, Esq., was gazetted Lieutenant in the Corps in May, 1901, and resigned on leaving the district in 1905.

The Company assembled in large numbers for a church parade on Sunday, May 19th, 1901, to do honour to the memory of two members who had sacrificed their lives on the altar of duty in South Africa—Corporals Colvin and Abbott. These non-commissioned officers were both residents of St. Philip's

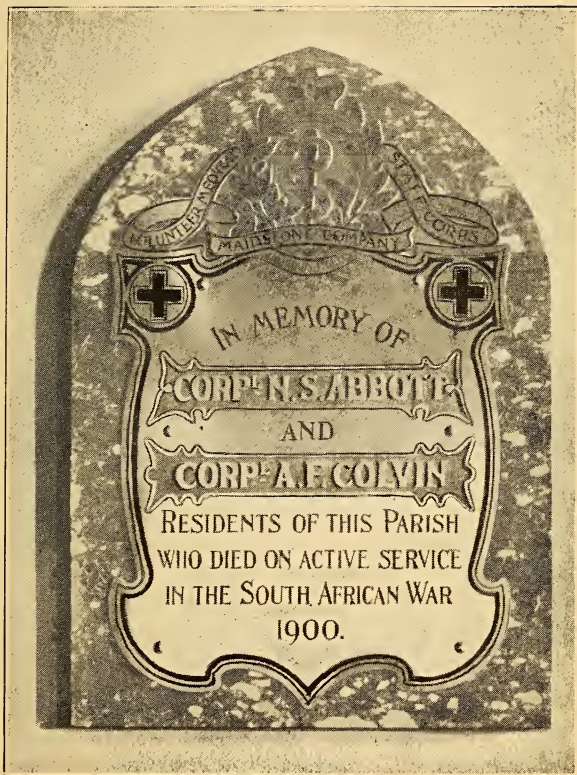


Photo by]

[E Clement.

THE MEMORIAL IN ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH.

Parish, Maidstone—one of them, in fact, Corporal Abbott, having been connected with St. Philip's church as a sidesman. The officers of the Company, aided by the parishioners and friends of the deceased, have therefore erected a brass to their memory in the church. In the course of the service the unveiling ceremony was performed by Surgeon-Captain C. Pye Oliver. An eloquent sermon was preached by the Rev. C. G. Duffield, M.A. (Chaplain), who spoke in feeling terms of the noble self-sacrifice of the two comrades whom God, in His inscrutable wisdom, had called away. The memorial, he said, would always be of pathetic interest to members of this Corps, being the first record of the first men of the Corps who had given their lives for their country; it would be the outward and visible sign, if any such sign were needed, that they, too, were prepared to risk their lives in the performance of their duty to their country. It should, he believed it would, give to each successive generation of members a higher idea of duty, a nobler motive of pride in the body to which they belonged, and in the uniform which they wore, and inspire them with a desire to avoid anything which might bring discredit upon it. A memorial church parade has been held each year since at St. Philip's on the Sunday nearest the anniversary of the unveiling of the brass, the sermon on each occasion being preached by the Chaplain.

The annual inspection of 1901 was held at the Lock Meadows, Maidstone. Colonel Leake, the inspecting officer, complimented the men on their work, and on the fact that the Company had up to that time sent no less than ninety-two men to South Africa.

The Company was stationed at Dover for a week's training in 1901, the men being quartered in the Citadel on the Western Heights, from which excellent views of the English Channel and French coast could be obtained. Hospital duty constituted the main part of the week's work.

Another change of title. The title of the Corps was again changed in February, 1902, by an Army Order in which His Majesty the King graciously approved of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps being designated the Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers), in consideration of the valuable services rendered during the war in South Africa. Under this Order also, the titles of officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers) were altered, they being no longer required to use the word "Surgeon" before their rank.

Permission was granted in 1902 for a second Company to be raised, and the Maidstone Companies now have to furnish in case of war or threatened invasion one bearer company and two field hospitals. The personnel of these includes 281 officers, non-commissioned officers and men.

On duty at Netley Hospital. During 1902 and 1903, in the absence of the Regular orderlies in South Africa, some thirty-five members of the Companies were on duty in the wards of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley. A very strict examination had to be passed by every candidate before he could be accepted for this service, and it is to

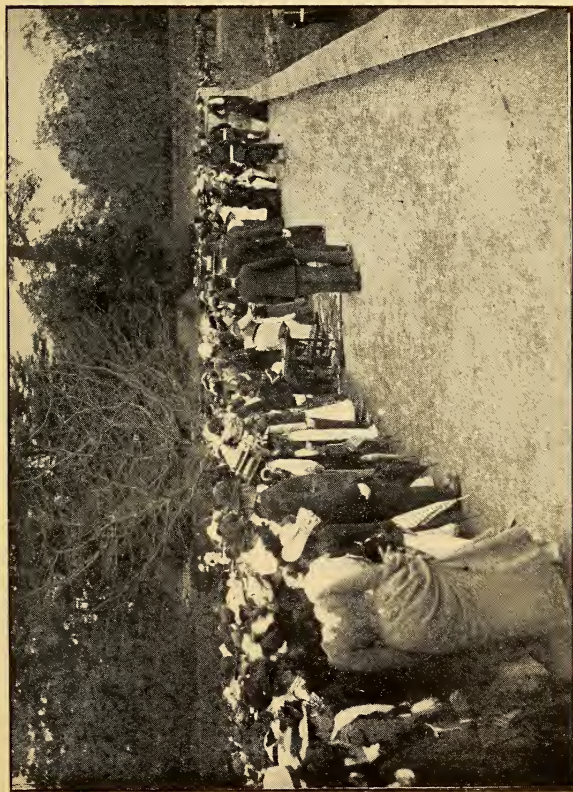


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PRESENTATION OF WAR MEDALS

BY

H.R.H. PRINCESS HENRY OF BATTENBERG.



the credit of the Companies that the non-commissioned officers and men employed were certified as efficient in hospital and nursing duties by the Surgeon-General Commanding at Netley Hospital.

J. M. Rogers-Tillstone, Esq., joined the Companies as Lieutenant in 1902, and was promoted Captain in 1905.

**Presentation of
War Medals by
H.R.H. Princess
Henry of Batten-
berg.**

A splendid parade of the Companies took place on Wednesday, May 28th, 1902, when medals for service in South Africa were presented to thirty-two members by H.R.H. Princess Henry of Battenberg. The Companies paraded at half-past two o'clock and marched to Vinters Park. The presentation took place on the terrace, the men parading under the command of Major C. Pye Oliver. The first non-commissioned officer to receive his medal was Sergeant W. W. Weeden, who had been specially promoted by Lord Kitchener for gallantry under fire. Her Royal Highness personally congratulated him and pinned the medal on his tunic. The remainder then filed past, each man receiving his medal with a few gracious words from the Princess.

The Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII. The Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII. was to have taken place in June, 1902, and fifty members of the Maidstone Companies had the honour to be selected for duty in the streets of London during the passage of the Royal Procession. The detachment left Maidstone on Monday afternoon and encamped in

Kensington Gardens. Everything seemed to be proceeding smoothly when, like a thunderbolt, came the news of His Majesty's serious illness, and the consequent indefinite postponement of the Coronation. Great was the sorrow and consternation in all ranks, but nothing remained to be done but to return to Maidstone. Before doing this, however, the members of the detachment had ample opportunity of seeing the splendid decorations in London, which compensated them in some measure for their disappointment. The following officers, non-commissioned officers and men constituted the first Coronation contingent :—Major C. Pye Oliver, M.D. (in command) ; Lieutenant J. M. Rogers-Tillstone ; Captain and Quartermaster W. J. Saveall ; Sergeant-Major G. Fowler ; First-class Staff-Sergeants E. J. Viggers and G. E. Barney ; Drum-Major A. Hart ; Sergeants W. Boardman, H. H. J. Clark, H. D. Usmar, H. C. Okill ; Lance-sergeant A. E. Peters ; Corporals H. Barney, J. H. Boardman, F. J. Bushnell, G. R. Elbourn, H. S. Gates, G. Loder, F. G. Payne, E. Woollett, F. J. Wood ; Lance-corporal L. Mace ; Privates F. J. T. Bevis, H. T. Cameron, C. J. Chambers, T. L. Chantler, A. C. Clarke, J. Clarke, W. Coppin, A. C. Cooper, W. T. Davy, O. J. Draycon, W. Ellis, H. G. Ellis, A. Evenden, A. H. Grey, H. Hills, L. W. Lockyer, A. H. J. Lynn, R. E. Marsden, F. C. Pearson, C. A. Payne, G. W. Pryer, A. Sales, H. R. Sallows, W. A. Savage, G. W. Shipp, W. C. Waghorne, H. J. Washford, W. H. Weeden, F. White, F. H. White, W. Wye.

At the postponed Coronation, in August, the Companies were again represented, but only by a small

detachment. Great competition ensued for the honour of a place, and the Commanding Officer finally decided that members who had served in South Africa should have the first opportunity, the remaining places being drawn for. This matter having been settled, the detachment left Maidstone the day before the ceremony, and again encamped in Kensington Gardens. The men were early on duty on Coronation Day, and were stationed from Trafalgar Square to Whitehall, thus obtaining a good view of the procession. No serious casualties occurred until after the procession had passed on the return journey, when a horse attached to a carriage took fright and dashed into the ranks of some representatives of one of His Majesty's native Indian Regiments, several of them being rendered unconscious. Ten of the injured men were conveyed on stretchers by members of the Maidstone Companies, in a very prompt and skilful manner, to the Westminster Hospital. The detachment then returned to Kensington Gardens, and after a meal commenced the return journey to Maidstone. Two decorations were awarded to representatives of the Maidstone Companies for their services on this occasion—the Coronation silver medal to Major C. Pye Oliver, and a bronze medal to Sergeant-Major G. Fowler. The names of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men forming the Coronation detachment were :—Major C. Pye Oliver (in command) ; Lieutenants W. E. Fry and J. M. Rogers-Tillstone ; Captain and Quartermaster W. J. Saveall ; Sergeant-Major G. Fowler ; First-class Staff-sergeants G. E. Barney and F. Loder ; Drum-Major A. Hart ; Sergeants H. C. Okill,

H. H. J. Clark, W. W. Weeden, H. D. Usmar, W. Boardman, V. S. Pickford; Corporals A. H. Brown, J. H. Boardman, H. Barney, G. Loder, G. Tye, F. C. Gilbert; Lance-corporal L. Mace; Privates F. J. T. Bevis, W. Ellis, H. G. Ellis, W. Hale, H. B. Hills, E. Mayger, H. H. J. Swift, A. Sales, N. B. Tapsfield, H. J. Washford.

The annual camp for 1902 was held at Shorncliffe, in July, the Companies occupying some of the galvanised huts in what is locally known as "Tin Town."

The annual inspection took place on August Bank Holiday, at Mote Park, Maidstone, the Companies on this occasion being honoured by the presence of the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor of London (Sir Joseph Dimsdale), and Lady Dimsdale, Sir Marcus and Lady Samuel, etc. The Director-General of the Army Medical Department (Surgeon-General Sir William Taylor, K.C.B.), had promised to inspect the Companies, but owing to unforeseen circumstances was unable to attend. His place was taken by Colonel Leake, Principal Medical Officer of the Thames District, and Colonel Wilson, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., of the War Office headquarters staff, who reported satisfactorily on the work of the Companies.

Sergeant-Major G. Fowler was the recipient of several valuable presentations on the eve of his retirement in 1903. The first of these took the form of an illuminated address and a purse of gold subscribed by the members of the Corps and the townspeople of

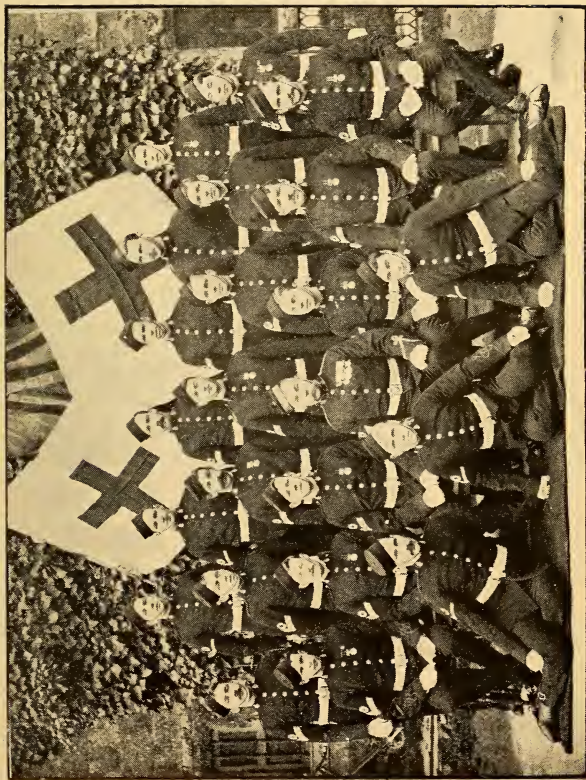


Photo by

THE CORPORALS, 1903.

[London Photo. Co.]

Maidstone in recognition of his valuable services to the town. The address, which was enclosed in an oak frame with gilt moulding was as follows:—"To Sergt.-Major George Fowler. Sir,—In asking your acceptance of the accompanying purse of gold, your numerous friends in the Borough of Maidstone desire to express in material form their high appreciation of the services you have rendered as instructor to the Maidstone Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers), and the exceptional services which were rendered by you during the typhoid epidemic in 1897. We also herewith desire to place on record that it was largely owing to your untiring efforts, energy, and perseverance that the Maidstone Company, Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers), was enabled to furnish by far the largest number of Volunteers for the front during the Boer War, 1899-1902, of any similar company in the United Kingdom. Signed, on behalf of the committee and subscribers, Edwin J. Viggers, chairman; C. Dann, hon. sec. and treasurer." Other presentations took the form of full size framed photographs of the various ranks of the corps at that time serving, viz., the staff-sergeants and sergeants, corporals and lance-corporals, and the privates, all of which were publicly presented to Sergeant-Major Fowler.

The annual inspection of 1903 was **Inspected by the** an interesting event in several ways.
Director-General. In the first place, the Director-General of the Army Medical Department, Surgeon-General Sir William Taylor, K.C.B., was enabled to redeem his promise to inspect the Companies, and secondly it was the last inspection in which Sergeant-

Major G. Fowler participated as instructor. After the inspection the Companies were formed up, and war medals and clasps presented to several members. The Director-General then addressed the men, complimenting them upon their smart and soldierly bearing, and expressing his regret that Sergeant-Major Fowler was retiring after thirty years' service in the Army, because he knew the excellent work he had done during the whole time he had been the chief non-commissioned officer of the Maidstone Companies.

**The Advent of
Sergeant-Major
Harris.**

Sergt.-Major E. J. Harris, R.A.M.C., of the headquarters staff at Aldershot, was appointed instructor to the Companies in May, 1903. He came with the highest credentials for service both at home and abroad, and has since proved himself a worthy successor to our first instructor. The Companies have been very fortunate in this respect, for the success or failure of a Volunteer Corps depends to a very large extent upon the tact and ability of its instructor.

The camp was held at Netley, covering a period of two weeks in August. Much useful instruction was obtained in the wards of the Royal Victoria Hospital. The visit was made more interesting from the fact that several of our members were at that time employed in the Hospital.

**The Monckton
Drill Hall.**

The Companies were busily engaged in Maidstone on August 31st, 1903, when the Lord Mayor of London (Sir Marcus Samuel), accompanied by the Lady Mayoress and his Sheriffs in full civic state, laid the



SERGT.-MAJOR E. J. HARRIS.

foundation stone of the Monckton Drill Hall, so named in honour of the founder of the Companies. The Lord Mayor also unveiled a tablet erected in the Maidstone Museum to commemorate the services of Maidstone Volunteers who took part in the South African War, of whom by far the largest number were members of the Maidstone Companies, Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers). The funds for the drill hall had been raised in various ways. The handsome sum of £600 was contributed by the Kent County Council, largely owing to the efforts of Major F. S. W. Cornwallis. The remainder had been raised by means of donations from friends of the corps, and by the efforts of the men themselves in the form of entertainments, an assault-at-arms, and a grand sale of work and exhibition of war relics. The cost of the present land and buildings was about £1,500, and an additional sum of £2,000 will be required to complete the original scheme, which includes offices and recreation rooms, and a much larger drill hall. On arriving at the site of the drill hall in College Road, the Lord Mayor was presented with a silver trowel by Mr. George Marsham, Chairman of the Kent County Council, who at the same time requested him to lay the foundation stone. The Lord Mayor having declared the stone well and truly laid, a vote of thanks to him was proposed by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Earl Stanhope, and seconded by Major C. Pye Oliver. The Lord Mayor, in reply, complimented the Companies upon their past history, and hoped that the drill hall they were now commencing to build would justify the anticipations of those who were erecting it. At four o'clock the Lord

Mayor proceeded to the Museum and unveiled the commemoration tablet mentioned above, a guard of honour being furnished by the Maidstone Companies, Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers). The tablet is in the Great Hall of the Museum.

At the unveiling and dedication of a tablet to the memory of men of Kentish Regiments who fell during the South African campaign, the Companies were represented by Lieutenant J. M. Rogers-Tillstone and thirty-four non-commissioned officers and men. The tablet, which was unveiled by the late Very Rev. Dean Hole, is in Rochester Cathedral.

The names of several members of the Companies are inscribed upon a brass erected in All Saints' Church, Maidstone, by Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Laurence in memory of townsmen of Maidstone, among whom was their son, who lost their lives during the war in South Africa. The names of the members of these Companies so recorded are Corporals A. F. Colvin and N. S. Abbott, Privates A. B. Reynolds and G. H. Crittenden.

It was considered a great privilege to the members of the Companies when, in March, 1904, Colonel Cantlie graciously accepted the position of Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant. Colonel Cantlie has always been intimately associated with the Volunteer Medical arrangements of the British Army, he being among the first to perceive the need of more extensive ambulance arrangements for our Volunteer Forces. Since he has held this position he has always taken the greatest



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GATEWAY, MONCKTON DRILL HALL.



interest in the welfare of the Companies, and his genial presence and breezy speeches are always much appreciated at the various social gatherings in connection with the Corps which he frequently attends.

Bernard Dalby Hobson, Esq., was gazetted to a commission in the Companies as Lieutenant and Quartermaster in May, 1904.

The Monckton Drill Hall was formally opened in the presence of a distinguished company by the Mayor, Alderman W. Morling, on Wednesday, July 20th, 1904, and has proved a great boon to the men and to those charged with their instruction. In celebration of the event, His Worship very hospitably entertained the members of the Corps in the new building.

An interesting The Companies journeyed to Shorn-cliffe in August, 1904, for their annual
Camp, 1904. training, being stationed in Enbrook

Field. In order to give the transport section more opportunity of learning their duties a new departure was made on this occasion, they journeying to camp by road instead of as previously going by rail. The Companies were encamped with the Sussex Brigade, and formed and worked a Field Hospital for the week. The annual inspection was made by Colonel Quill, after which he presented Pensioner-Sergeant-Major Fowler with the medal for meritorious service, which His Majesty the King had graciously conferred upon him. The medal carries with it an annuity of £10. The Colonel, having congratulated him, mentioned that it was

an honour only granted in case of exceptional service. Referring to the inspection, he complimented Major Oliver on the excellence of his men, saying their work could hardly have been excelled by regulars. The Companies were inspected on the Friday at camp by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, Inspector-General of the Forces, who appeared to take a special interest in the Maidstone Companies, addressing various encouraging remarks to individual non-commissioned officers and men as he passed along the line. At the close of the inspection His Royal Highness expressed his appreciation of the good work Major Oliver and his men were engaged in, and incidentally remarked that he had many pleasant reminiscences of Maidstone, having been stationed there early in his military career.

In November, 1904, the Companies were invited by Colonel Fenn, Principal Medical Officer at Fort Pitt, to take part in some extensive field operations in the neighbourhood of Chatham, in conjunction with the Royal Army Medical Corps stationed there. The day was bitterly cold, and there were several inches of snow upon the ground, but the men acquitted themselves admirably, and gained the commendations of the officer in command. At the close of the operations the non-commissioned officers and men were hospitably entertained by their comrades of the Royal Army Medical Corps at Fort Pitt Hospital.

Captain and Quartermaster W. J. Saveall retired in 1905, with a record of nearly twenty years' strenuous work in the Corps, he having been a member since its formation.

The Non-commissioned Officers' Mess
1905. was dissolved early in 1905, separate
 Sergeants' and Corporals' Messes being
 formed, as it was considered that the numbers of each
 had grown sufficiently large to maintain separate
 organisations.

In July, 1905, for the first time in the annals of the
 Companies, they were represented in open ambulance
 competitions at Rainham. In the one-man competition,
 open to competitors within a ten miles radius of Rainham,
 Corporal H. Russell succeeded in winning the Brice
 Memorial Cup and gold medal against twenty-seven
 competitors. In the team competition, open to Kent, for
 the Rainham Ambulance Shield, a team of the Com-
 panies, under Corporal F. J. Wood, was placed second,
 receiving gold-centre medals as runners-up.

The camp and inspection of 1905 were again held at
 Shorncliffe, the inspection in camp, inaugurated the
 previous year having proved a satisfactory innovation.
 The routine of the week consisted mainly of field-work,
 the work of the corps in actual warfare being explained
 by the officers during the operations. The inspection
 was made by Lieutenant-Colonel Martin, who gave a
 satisfactory report. A series of sports on the Friday
 afternoon was a new feature of this camp.

**The Snodland
 Detachment.**

The chief event in 1905 was the for-
 mation of a detachment of the Com-
 panies at Snodland, the success of
 which was almost phenomenal, ninety
 men being recruited in a few months. This was not the

first attempt to form a detachment of the Corps at Snodland, for in 1889 Surgeon-Major D. H. Monckton applied for permission to open a drill station there. This, however, was refused, owing to the opposition of the Officer Commanding 3rd Kent Artillery Volunteers, who considered that the district was not populous enough to support more than one corps. This objection did not apply in 1905, as the Artillery detachment had been disbanded, and the required permission was at once granted. A large number of ex-Artillerymen joined the detachment. Under the able tuition of Sergeant-Major E. J. Harris the Snodland men have made rapid progress, and now compare favourably in every way with their comrades at headquarters. A band has been started in connection with the detachment under the direction of Drum-Major A. Hart, of headquarters. The Rev. E. D. Finch-Smith, the Rector of Snodland, has taken the liveliest interest in the formation of the detachment, and has since accepted a commission as Acting-Chaplain, transferring from the 1st Volunteer Battalion (The Queen's Own) Royal West Kent Regiment. Staff-sergeant W. Boardman has been appointed staff-sergeant in charge of the detachment.

The Mayor of Maidstone, Alderman S. Britt, J.P., presented a silver cup to be competed for in the corps during 1905, which was won by Staff-sergeant W. Boardman.

The first event of importance in 1906
1906. was the opening of a branch of the
Royal Army Temperance Association
in connection with the Companies, in March, by the

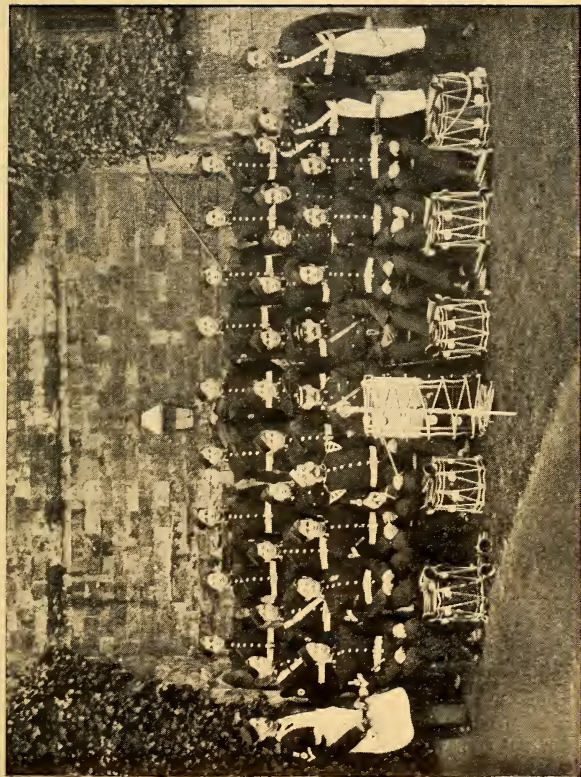


Photo by

THE BAND, 1905.

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Vicar of Maidstone, the Rev. E. H. Hardcastle, M.A. Lance-sergeant A. W. Cooper was the energetic promoter and first Hon. Secretary.

In May, 1906, negotiations were opened by Dr. A. R. Henchley, of Canterbury, with the Commanding Officer, the object being to form a detachment of the Maidstone Companies, Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers) in that City. Dr. Henchley had given much time and money in training members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, which he founded there some three years previously, and as equipment, etc., could only be obtained by voluntary effort, and the membership was falling off, he felt that the interests could be extended, membership increased, and the usefulness of "first aid" amplified by running concurrently a military organisation with requirements on similar lines, and in these he saw the nucleus of such a body. The negotiations having proved successful, Dr. Henchley in due course received a commission as Lieutenant in these Companies, and proceeded at once to form the detachment. He had the advantage of experience in Army Medical work, having been engaged for two years as Senior Civil Surgeon at the Royal Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, during the South African campaign. The first steps were taken at a meeting held in June for the purpose of presenting medallions and certificates to members of his Railway Ambulance Class. The meeting took place at the Corn Exchange, Canterbury, the Mayor and several members of the Corporation being present. After the

presentation, Lieutenant Henchley called for recruits for the Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers) from among those present, when practically the whole of the St. John Ambulance Brigade members at once responded. With this promising start success was assured. In three weeks fifty men had joined, and at the time of writing there are over eighty enrolled members of the Corps in Canterbury, and the total number of applications for enrolment are more than sufficient to form a company. Arrangements were made for drills and ambulance instruction to take place at the Corn Exchange, by kind permission of the Mayor and Corporation, under the Lieutenant Commanding, assisted by Sergeant-Major E. J. Harris, from headquarters, Maidstone, and Sergeant F. E. Smith, a member with seventeen years' previous military experience. So well did the equipment and instruction of the detachment proceed, that, although it was only sanctioned in June, a contingent was ready by August to proceed to Seaford for training with their comrades from Maidstone and Snodland, where they acquitted themselves in such satisfactory manner as to compare favourably with the oldest members of the Companies. In October, 1906, the Rev. J. le Mare Shallis, was gazetted as Acting-Chaplain, and at once began to exhibit the keenest interest in the detachment. He was an ardent advocate of a project to open a headquarters, with recreation room for the use of members, and this ultimately became an accomplished fact, a certain sum being allowed from the Corps funds, augmented by financial assistance from Lieutenant Henchley. Accommodation was obtained in Stour Street

and comfortable headquarters fitted up. The next move was in the direction of forming brass and bugle bands. This scheme presented many difficulties, but these were overcome, and the bands are now making rapid progress under the able direction of Bandmaster Smith, late of the "Buffs." The detachment is well supplied with officers, as in addition to the Lieutenant Commanding and the Acting-Chaplain, P. C. Burgess, Esq., of Margate, has received a commission. G. E. Barford, Esq., has also become associated with the detachment as Lieutenant and Quartermaster. Lieutenant Burgess has undertaken to form a detachment at Margate, permission having already been obtained from the War Office. The first annual prize distribution and concert of the detachment was held at the Foresters' Hall, Canterbury, on November 26th, 1906, when there were over four hundred Volunteers and friends present to show their interest in the new movement. Lieutenant Henchley presided, and the visitors included the Mayor, Alderman F. Bennett-Goldney, and members of the Corporation, and other prominent citizens. During the evening the Mayor, in responding to the toast of his health, complimented the Chairman on the formation of the detachment, and the men upon the noble character of the work they had undertaken, that of ameliorating the sufferings of their comrades in their time of need. At the conclusion the Chairman announced that the Mayor had offered a cup for competition during the year 1907. On January 9th, 1907, the members of the detachment were the guests of the Acting-Chaplain, the Rev. J. le Mare Shallis, at St. Mildred's Parish Room. In proposing

the health of the Chaplain, Lieutenant Henchley referred to the great services he had rendered during the short period he had been connected with the Companies. The rev. gentleman, in response, said it would always be a pleasure to him to do anything he could for the Corps, and trusted that the members would look upon him as a friend, and come to him at all times when he could be helpful to them in any way. As showing the keenness of the members of the detachment, it may be mentioned that the average attendance at drills is well over forty. A word of praise is due to the members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade who are also members of the detachment for the splendid support they have given to the Lieutenant Commanding, and if any distinction may be made, notably to Sergeant F. E. Smith, Corporals Mant, Black, and Hayward, and Private Nowers. From the foregoing it will be seen that the prospects of the Corps in Canterbury are very bright, and when permission has been granted for a full company to be raised there it will undoubtedly be one of the most efficient in the country.

A change of venue for camp was made
The Camp at in 1906, the Companies journeying to
Seaford, 1906. Seaford, Sussex. About 170 members were present, probably the largest attendance at any camp in the history of the Companies. Detachments were present from Snodland and Canterbury, and the following officers also attended:—Major C. Pye Oliver (in command), Captain J. M. Rogers-Tillstone (Acting-Adjutant), Lieutenants A. R. Henchley, J. A. Gibb, J. Ward, and Lieutenant and Quartermaster B. D. Hobson. The presence of so many officers undoubtedly had

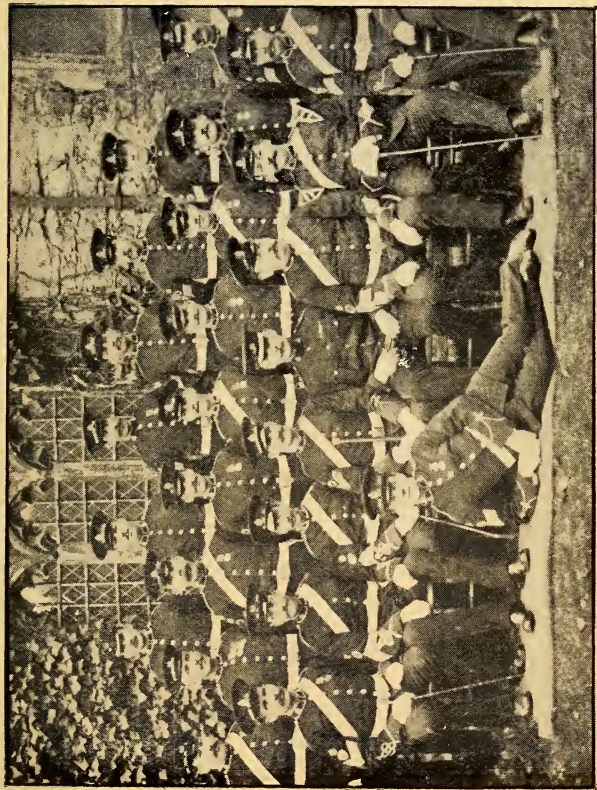


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THE SERGEANTS, 1906.

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much to do with the success of the camp. The Companies took with them their own horses, ambulance wagons, and service carts from Maidstone, and during the week the horses were picketed in the open under the care of the transport section, the whole camp, in fact, being worked as far as possible under active service conditions. The camp was situated at East Blatchington, about one mile inland. On the Tuesday the Companies formed a Field Ambulance for the 1st London Brigade, and took part in some important manœuvres. A hostile force was supposed to have landed at Eastbourne at daybreak, cut all communications, and established some batteries on the Downs near Beachy Head. A similar force was supposed to have landed at Newhaven and Pevensey. To the 1st London Brigade was entrusted the task of repelling the invaders, and this they succeeded in doing, the "enemy" being defeated at all points. The three sections of the Field Ambulance provided by the Maidstone Companies were distributed among the various battalions comprising the Brigade, and during the operations several accidents were successfully dealt with. Mr. Haldane, Secretary of State for War, and Lord Methuen were present. At an informal meeting of commanding officers, after the manœuvres, at which Major Oliver was present, Mr. Haldane said he was in entire sympathy with the aims and work of the Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers). During the week the Companies were largely engaged in field work in the neighbourhood of West Dean, a district eminently suited for this class of work. The annual inspection was held on August 10th, the inspecting officer being Colonel Croly,

Administrative Medical Officer at Dover, who was accompanied by Surgeon-General Charlton, Principal Medical Officer, Eastern Command. The Companies first paraded in camp to receive the officers, who, on arrival, minutely inspected the ranks, and afterwards the camp. A Field Ambulance was next formed and a move made to some hilly ground at the rear of the camp. There the men demonstrated their ability to render first-aid and collect the wounded after an imaginary battle, and bring them safely to the dressing station, where the bandages and dressings were carefully inspected and questions asked with reference to the supposed injuries. After the inspection, the Companies were formed up, and Surgeon-General Charlton complimented them on the able and intelligent manner in which their work had been carried out, which left no doubt that they thoroughly understood the duties they would be called upon to perform in time of war. Colonel Croly also made a few remarks, expressing his entire satisfaction, as Inspecting Officer, with all he had seen, especially with regard to the practical work. The camp at Seaford was probably one of the most successful in the history of the Companies, the men heartily appreciating the change of scene.

J. Aldington Gibb, Esq., M.B., received a commission as Lieutenant in the Corps in May, 1906, and Joseph Ward, Esq., in August, 1906.

Looking back over the first twenty-one
Retrospective. years of the Companies' existence, the question arises: Have they realised the objects aimed at by their founder, that they should be an

ambulance corps for daily service in time of peace, and a reserve Medical Staff Corps should their services be required in time of war? To answer this in the affirmative one would only have to mention the part taken by the members of the corps in the typhoid epidemic in Maidstone and their services during the South African War. But this is not all. Since a record was kept of the cases in which first-aid has been rendered by members of the Companies, nearly two hundred have been reported, and for every case reported it can safely be assumed that there are five less serious ones which are not. Again, 1,200 men have passed through the Companies since their formation, many of whom are now scattered in all parts of the world. Most of these would retain the practical knowledge of ambulance work gained in the Corps, and consequently many victims of accidents, perhaps thousands of miles from Maidstone, have had cause to bless the organisation in which their Good Samaritan was first instructed to render first-aid to the injured. Most of these men, also, would join the Corps at a time when their bodies were in process of development, and the drill, discipline, and time spent in camp must have been to their advantage physically, if in no other direction. Another useful work which the Companies undertake, but which is not generally known, is the removal of helpless patients for medical men. This is done by means of a novel arrangement of indiarubber slings holding a stretcher in an ambulance wagon, the invention of the late Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel D. H. Monckton, V.D., and Sergeant-Major G. Fowler. Patients have been moved many miles in safety and

comfort by this means. One of the most important factors in the success of the Companies has been the excellent headquarters that were provided by the foresight of the founder of the Corps when he selected rooms situate at the Old Palace, Maidstone. This ancient building, formerly the residence of the Archbishops, and of great historic interest, had just before the formation of the corps been purchased and presented to the town in commemoration of the Jubilee of her late Majesty Queen Victoria. The whole of the ground floor is now occupied by the corps, the various rooms being used as an orderly room, armoury, sergeants', corporals' and privates' messes. There is also a room where a branch of the Royal Army Temperance Association holds its meetings. Every accommodation for games, reading, etc., is provided in these Messes, and from the windows of either splendid views of the River Medway can be obtained. It need hardly be said that these rooms are much frequented by members of the Companies, and the origin of many a lasting friendship might be traced to the mess rooms at the Old Palace. A record of this kind would be incomplete unless some acknowledgment were made of the kindness of many owners of parks and land in the district who have so often permitted the corps to use these for inspections, field work, etc., and also for practice purposes. On some of these occasions, also, the Companies have been most hospitably entertained by their hosts. Prominent in this direction have been the late Mrs. Whatman, Colonel F. S. W. Cornwallis, Colonel C. E. Warde, M.P., Sir Marcus Samuel, C. P. Wykeham-Martin, Esq., S. Lee Smith, Esq.,

W. T. Fremlin, Esq., and the late W. Laurence, Esq. Many residents of the town and district, too, have materially assisted in the work of the Companies by means of subscriptions and donations for various objects, and to these the best thanks of all connected with the corps are extended in the full knowledge that without such help the high degree of efficiency and usefulness which this history records could never have been attained. During the last few years there has been one drawback to the development of the Companies, viz., the scarcity of officers. This fact is quite easily understood. Volunteering, as far as officers are concerned, is not fashionable. Not Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers) alone, but all kinds of Volunteer forces all over the country are suffering in the same way from lack of officers at the present time. If this were not so, one would think that the eligible medical men of the town would be proud to associate themselves with a corps possessing such a record as the Maidstone Companies, Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers). The establishment of the Companies provides for eleven company officers and two quartermasters. For several years, however, in addition to the Commanding Officer, there was only one company officer (Captain Tillstone) and one quartermaster (Captain Saveall). The former unfortunately resided in Gloucestershire, and could not attend parades except at camp. As a consequence the whole of the work fell upon the shoulders of Major Oliver and the quartermaster. This would probably have daunted men of less determination, but, aided by an indefatigable Sergeant-Major, they managed to fulfil

all obligations. Matters improved considerably in this direction during 1906, however, and now, with the help of so many young and energetic officers the prospects of the Companies seem brighter than ever, and there seems to be no reason why they should not prosper in the future as they have done in the past.



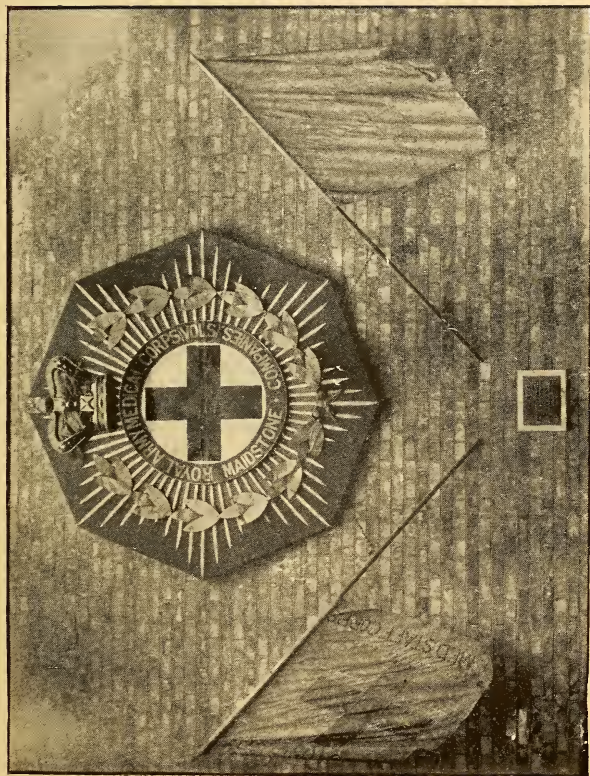


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FLAGS TAKEN TO SOUTH AFRICA
AND TROPHY BY THE LATE SERGEANT F. BRENNAN.

The inscription on the tablet is as follows :—"These flags were used by the Maidstone Cos., Royal Army Medical Corps (Vols.) in South Africa during the Boer War, 1900-1902."

Part 2.

THE WORK OF THE COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE BOER WAR, 1899 TO 1902.

THE connection of the Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps with the Boer War may be said to have commenced on September 25th, 1899, when a letter was sent to the Secretary of State for War offering the services of a number of members to take duty with the regular forces should hostilities commence. A reply was received thanking the men for their patriotic offer, but stating that it was not intended to utilise Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, as such, in South Africa. It was a great disappointment to the men who had volunteered, but it was not long before their hopes were realised. In February, 1900, a letter was received stating that a draft of men from the Maidstone Company would be accepted. Upon receipt of this letter all was bustle and excitement at the Old Palace. The members forming the contingent were attested at the Town Hall, before the Mayor, Edmund Vaughan, Esq., and in about ten days had left Maidstone for Aldershot, having a most enthusiastic send-off from their comrades and the townspeople generally. They were the first Volunteers to

leave the county town of Kent for the seat of war. This contingent numbered only fourteen, but before the conclusion of hostilities the Company had sent out no fewer than 150 non-commissioned officers and men. Before proceeding with the actual doings of the men, we might, perhaps, enquire a little into the motives which prompted them to leave home, friends, and comfort, to face privation—and perhaps death—in a land thousands of miles away. It was clearly no mercenary motive, for the pay of a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps is no better than that of a skilled mechanic or clerk. Their ideas were far above mere money-making. They were the men who for years had given time and taken the trouble to make themselves efficient to serve if their country should require them, and they, together with Volunteers in other branches of the service, saw in the South African War an opportunity to show that they were not playing at soldiers, but were ready to take their place side by side with the Regular Forces of the Empire should occasion arise. Another motive was that they might do their part in adding fresh honours to the Corps with which they were proud to be associated. Now as to their work when they arrived at the seat of war. A record of this kind must of necessity be of the doings of particular individuals or small parties, as men from the Maidstone Company were employed in every part of South Africa. Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Transvaal, Natal, Rhodesia, Zululand, Bechuanaland, Swaziland, were each visited at some period of the war, while in the performance of their duties Privates Sisley and Chapman were sent to Ceylon and Australia respec-

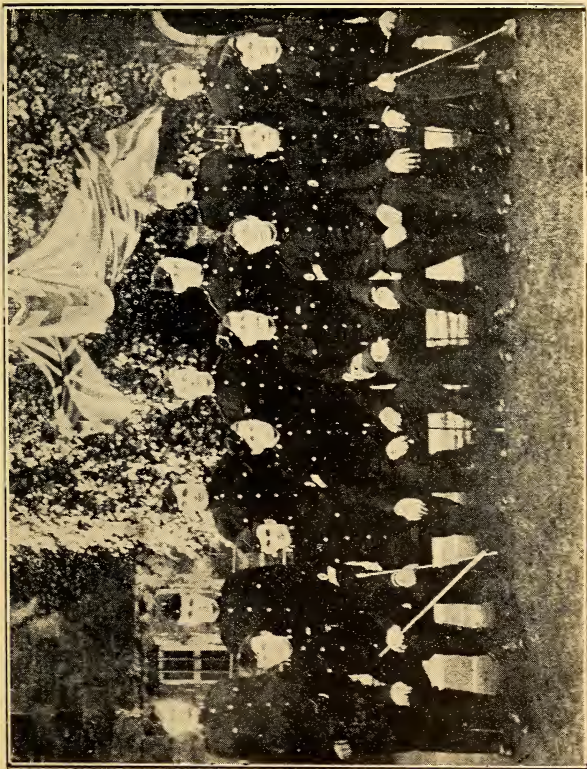


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THE FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT.

[De Kith & Dunk.

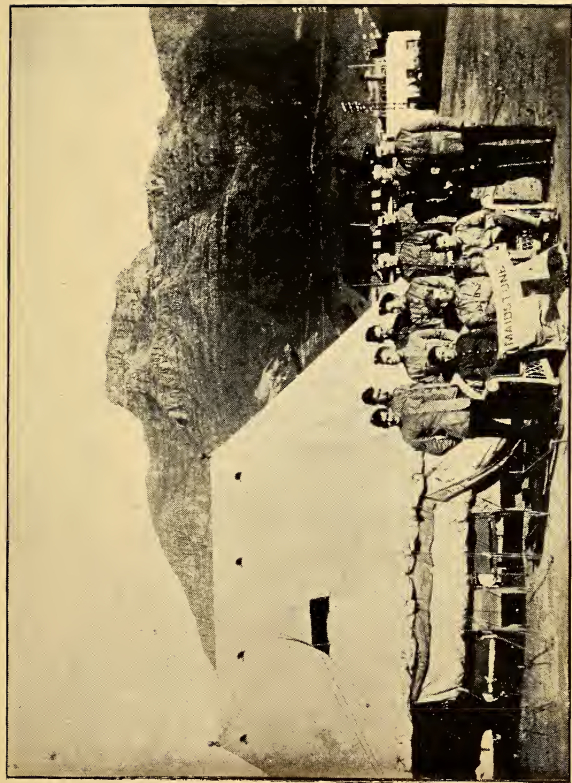
tively. Five non-commissioned officers and men, Corporals A. F. Colvin and N. S. Abbott, Privates A. B. Reynolds, G. H. Crittenden and C. V. Waghorn, unfortunately succumbed to disease. As to the duties performed, the great majority were, of course, employed in the hospitals nursing the sick and wounded. Others were employed in clerical work in connection with the various hospitals ; or as storekeepers, butchers, cooks, etc. Several were engaged on the hospital trains conveying the sick and wounded from the front to the base hospitals. The most fortunate men, however, were undoubtedly those employed as bearers or mounted orderlies with the columns. The work was not only much more healthy, being in the open air, but there was the additional inducement that the chance might arise for a man to win the coveted V.C. One of our members, Corporal Weeden, in fact, did come very near to winning it. As it was, he was promoted King's Sergeant by Lord Kitchener for gallantry under fire.

The First Contingent.

The first contingent to go on active service consisted of Staff-sergeant A. E. Capon ; Corporals V. S. Pickford, A. F. Colvin, G. Carlton, Privates G. Swift, C. Fagg, A. W. Cooper, C. Lambert, G. E. Barney, G. Johns, E. C. Crittenden, R. A. Wilson, H. Gammon, and G. Shaw. It may here be mentioned that this party carried with them to South Africa the original flag of the Company, which is shown in the illustration of the trophy and flags at the Monckton Drill Hall, and also in that of the group taken at Cape Town. On arrival at Aldershot the men received their

active service equipment, and were attached to No. 10 General Hospital, then being formed. They embarked at Birkenhead the following week in the s.s. "Orotava," being among the first of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps to leave this country for South Africa. On landing, the whole contingent was sent to the base hospital at Woodstock, near Cape Town, where most of them remained on duty nearly a year. It is interesting to note that while at Cape Town Privates Cooper and Barney were both employed at their trades, being a shoemaker and carpenter respectively. The men were very much disappointed at having to stay so long at the base, especially as most of their comrades from Maidstone, coming out later, were sent up country. A change came at last, however, and in small parties the men were passed to the front, having kept together longer than any of the other contingents. The only member of the first party to remain at Cape Town for the whole period of his service was Staff-sergeant Capon, who was Acting-Sergeant-Major of No. 5a General Hospital, a position he held with much credit to himself until he took his discharge to join the South African Constabulary.

Corporal Pickford was one of the first of this party to go up country, being sent to join the Scottish Hospital at Kroonstad, with which he remained five months. He was then attached to the 20th Field Hospital, of which Sergeant-Major Fowler's brother was at that time Sergeant-Major. The hospital afterwards went into the Transvaal, joining Colonel Beatson's column at Middelburg, this being one of the nine columns operating under General Sir Binden Blood. After trekking for a fortnight,



THE FIRST CONTINGENT AT CAPE TOWN.

the column came to Wagon Drift, where the first serious fighting took place. The Boers attacked at ten a.m., but were driven off in about two hours, mainly through the efforts of the Volunteer Elswick Battery. The wounded having been collected, the column moved on to Reitfontein. From there Corporal Pickford went out with a flying column across Oliphant's River to reconnoitre. The column then proceeded on its way to Bronkhurst Spruit, the scene of the first fight in the Boer War of '81. The next fighting seen by Corporal Pickford was at Welman's Rust, when he was out with a small column of one hundred and fifty men. They were surprised and surrounded by Boers, and the whole of them, with two pom-poms, captured, but not until twenty-one had been killed and forty-two wounded, including the medical officer. The Boers went away the next morning with their prisoners, leaving a veterinary surgeon and Corporal Pickford with a few men to attend to the wounded. They did the best they could until the arrival of the main body with the Field Hospital some hours later. The column then went to Middelburg to re-equip, the men of the Royal Army Medical Corps in the meantime being sent round to the other columns to collect the wounded and sick. After a few weeks trekking without incident, the column again arrived at Bronkhurst Spruit, where Corporal Pickford left it to return home via Pretoria and Cape Town.

Corporal Carlton, after leaving Cape Town, was sent to the Model School Hospital, at Pretoria. This building had been used by the Boers as a prison for

British officers, and was the one from which Mr. Winston Churchill made his dramatic escape.

Corporal Colvin was sent to Greenpoint Hospital, Cape Town, and placed in charge of a ward given by British Actors and Actresses. He, however, unfortunately fell a victim to enteric fever on August 23rd, 1900. He was in possession of the Jubilee medal and the medal for night nursing during the typhoid epidemic at Maidstone.

Private Johns, after leaving Cape Town, was with Colonel Plumer's column, operating in the Eastern Transvaal, and saw much fighting with the Colonial Bushmen.

Private Cooper's first experience up country was at Bloemfontein, where, on arrival he was isolated for ten days owing to his having come from an area infected by the plague. He then proceeded to Pretoria, and after six days with the details there was sent out with Colonel Benson's ill-fated column, going first to Middelburg and afterwards operating in the Eastern Transvaal. The column was engaged by the enemy at Dolstroom, Blood River Valley, Carolina, Ermelo, and Kaffirstad. At the latter place they lost rather heavily in killed and wounded, and when the column arrived at Brakkenlaagte it was in a somewhat weakened condition, and sustained a severe reverse, losing sixty-eight killed and three hundred wounded. Among the killed were Colonel Benson and Colonel Guinness. There were only thirteen men of the Royal Army Medical Corps with the column, and they had a very trying time attending to the



THE LATE CORPORAL A. F. COLVIN.

wounded in addition to the sick already in their charge. They managed to attend to them all, however, and soon afterwards assistance was obtained, and the wounded taken by easy stages to Springs. Private Cooper was ordered to Standerton while the column re-organised, but he never rejoined it, as, being time-expired, he here received orders to return home, having served in South Africa nearly two years.

Private E. C. Crittenden joined the 2nd Brigade Bearer Company at Standerton, under Brigadier-General G. Hamilton. The field of operations was between Standerton and Klerksdorp, and in the Magaliesberg Mountains, where on one occasion he met Private L. Hadler, another member of the Corps. He finished up at Klerksdorp, and during his journey to the coast narrowly escaped death, the train immediately following the one in which he was travelling being blown up by the Boers.

Privates Fagg, Lambert, Swift, Barney, Wilson, Shaw, and Gammon were sent to Gray's College Hospital, Bloemfontein. Here they remained for six months, until they received orders to return to England on the "Maplemore," with the exception of Private Shaw, who had just previously been invalided home.

The Second Contingent.

The second contingent was attested on March 12th, 1900, and proceeded to Aldershot four days later. After being equipped, the whole contingent was attached to No. 11 General Hospital. They did not, however, all go out in the same ship, but were detailed for

duty during the voyage on different transports, uniting again at Cape Town, and going on with No. 11 General Hospital to Kimberley. The Maidstone men, who consisted of Sergeant G. E. Sunnuck, Corporals W. W. Weeden, and E. Norris, Lance-corporals R. Sharp, R. Thrush, and F. H. Walker, Privates F. E. Colyer, W. Smith, E. M. Hibberd, N. B. Tapsfield, W. Locks, G. Loder, C. Knight, and H. A. Gammon, then assisted in the formation of the hospital. This work having been accomplished, Sergeant Sunnuck and Lance-corporal Sharp were ordered to join Lord Methuen's column at Boshof, but missed it, arriving half a day too late, and for the next three months were attached to the Boshof Field Hospital. They then returned to Kimberley, but after a few days Sergeant Sunnuck was again ordered to Boshof, where he remained on duty for the next fourteen months, when he returned to England.

Lance-corporal Sharp continued on duty at Kimberley about four months. He then joined Lord Methuen's column, in company with Corporal Norris, at Taungs. The column left that place on February 2nd, 1901, for Klerksdorp, and fighting began almost immediately, the first skirmish taking place at Uitval's Kop, the British having one man killed and seven wounded. The same night the camp was attacked by the Boers, but they were driven off. The column next proceeded to Doornbult, Schweezer Reneke, and north-east to Makouwspan. A midnight march was made to Wolmaransstad, where a slight skirmish took place. The journey was continued through Uitval to Reitfontein, and the main body then made a detour to get round Hartebeestfontein, where it

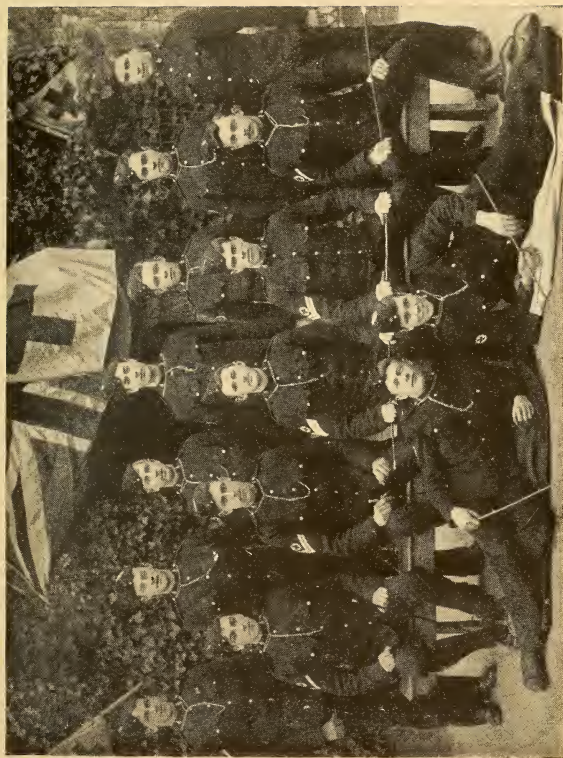


Photo by]

[De' Nth & Dunk.

THE SECOND SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT.

was known the Boers were assembled in force. The next day Hartebeestfontein Poort was attacked, the Boers offering a stubborn resistance. They were forced to decamp, however, leaving behind large quantities of stock and grain. The British casualties were twenty killed and thirty-nine wounded. The column arrived at Klerksdorp two days later, having captured 15,000 small stock and 5,000 cattle. The total killed and wounded in this expedition numbered eighty-nine. At this point Corporal Norris was taken ill and left the column. A few days later the column patrolled up the Schoonspruit Valley in the direction of Ventersdorp, capturing a number of prisoners, and for the next four months was occupied in clearing the Western Transvaal, rounding up stock and capturing small parties of Boers. Lance-corporal Sharp ultimately returned to Kimberley, whence he returned home.

Corporal Weeden remained at Kimberley with No. 11 General Hospital for the first few months. He was then attached to the Kimberley Flying Column, under Major Parris, which numbered six hundred of all ranks. The special duty of this column was to convoy supplies to outlying posts, and if the Boers were reported at any farm or township near Kimberley to be ready to proceed to the spot at a moment's notice. It was while out with this column that Corporal Weeden won his promotion to King's Sergeant. In describing the incident it must be mentioned that a convoy often straggles a great deal on the march, some of the animals tiring more quickly than others. While with the column at Bersefontein, Orange River Colony, on July 24th, 1901, the ambulance with

which Corporal Weeden was riding dropped back about half a mile behind the main body. Suddenly the Boers opened fire, and the ambulance was whipped up to rejoin the column. When still some distance behind word was passed back that a man of Denison's Scouts had been hit. At this time a row of hills obstructed the view of those in the ambulance of the fore part of the column, which was in action. The wounded man was lying on the ground on the other side of the hills, and the medical officer and Corporal Weeden at once galloped towards him, and on coming through a gap in the hills were under a cross-fire from Briton and Boer alike. The officer came into the open first, and someone shouted to him to dismount before proceeding to the wounded man. This he did, and then crawled along the ground towards his patient. Corporal Weeden afterwards came through the gap on horseback, and seeing the officer kneeling by the side of the wounded man commenced to ride towards him. Some Yeomanry were at the time firing from the flat roof of a house at the Boers, and Corporal Weeden had to pass in front of them. They shouted to him to dismount, but he did not understand them and continued to ride on, the bullets of the Yeomanry luckily passing over his head. When he comprehended the meaning of their cries he at once dismounted, and crawled on his stomach to the officer's side and assisted him to dress the wound. The officer then went for the ambulance, and Corporal Weeden was left with the wounded man, remaining with him until the officer brought up means for his removal. For his gallantry Corporal Weeden was mentioned in despatches

by Lord Kitchener, and was promoted as described above. With reference to this incident, the following appeared in the "London Gazette":—"R.A.M.C.—13631 Corporal W. W. Weeden (No. 421, Corporal, Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps), promoted Sergeant by Commander-in-Chief. At Bersefontein, Orange River Colony, on 24th July, 1901, rode some distance under fire to assist a wounded man lying in the open, and stayed with him twenty minutes, being fired at all the time." Some time after this the column got into serious difficulties. It was proceeding to Griquatown, and had bivouacked at a farmhouse before proceeding on the last stage of the journey. As far as could be ascertained there were no Boers in the vicinity, so the guns were unlimbered and the horses taken out for water, preparations being made to encamp near by for the night. Suddenly the Boers attacked in large numbers, and, to use Corporal Weeden's own words, "I never saw such a muddle before in all my life." This was due to the very skilful manner in which the Boers had planned and carried out the surprise. After some severe fighting, however, the Boers were repulsed, but not before five of our men had been killed and eighteen wounded. Upon the retreat of the Boers the column proceeded at once to Griquatown, leaving Sergeant Weeden with a party of Kaffirs to bury the dead and bring in the wounded. This was more easily said than done, for he had only two wagons, and there were enough wounded men to fill half-a-dozen, while his grave-digging implements consisted of two small pioneer shovels. These would have been sufficient had the

ground been entirely composed of sand, but six inches below the surface was solid rock. All that could be done, therefore, was to place the bodies in a shallow trench and heap the sand over them. They were afterwards interred by a burial party from Griquatown. Having disposed of the dead, the next business was to get the wounded men into Griquatown. Before a start could be made, however, the Boers again appeared on the scene, and asked whether there were any arms or ammunition in the wagons. Upon receiving a negative reply, the Commandant decided to have them searched, but without success. In the course of their search they managed to find a case of brandy intended for the patients, and this they proposed to confiscate. Sergeant Weeden protested, telling them they had no right to take it, and after a little grumbling they replaced the brandy and rode off, leaving him to his own devices. He managed eventually to get the whole of the wounded into the wagons, and started for Griquatown. A few miles from that place he was met by four surgeons with several ambulances, and to his great relief they took over his charge.

Lance-corporals Walker and Thrush, Privates Smith, Colyer, Locks, Hibberd, Loder, and Knight were employed during practically the whole of their service at No. 11 General Hospital, at Kimberley, with the exception that one or other of them sometimes went on trek for a few days with a convoy column. No. 11 General is said to have been the largest hospital of its kind in South Africa. There were one hundred and sixty mar-

EDMUND VAUGHAN 1898-9	MAYORS	WILLIAM BROWNSON RE. 1901-2
FREDERICK J. OLIVER 1900-1		WILLIAM DAY 1902-3

WEST KENT IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

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Photo by]

[De' Nith & Dunk

COMMEMORATION TABLET IN MAIDSTONE MUSEUM.

quees, each capable of holding eight beds, with the usual offices, steward's store, clean linen store, etc. In addition there were the officers' and sisters' quarters and orderlies' tents, the whole covering an area of nearly a square mile.

Private Gammon was sent from No. 11 General Hospital to the Field Hospital, Mafeking. It may be of interest to mention that he took with him to Mafeking the second of the Company's flags which were taken to South Africa, and shown on the left of the illustration. Private Gammon was in Mafeking during the great cyclone which swept over South Africa at the end of August, 1900. The cyclone lasted from 5.30 till 10 p.m. A convoy of fifty sick and wounded had arrived about two hours previously, and were just obtaining their hospital kits. Darkness suddenly came over the town, accompanied by lightning and thunder. While Private Gammon was at the hospital kitchen getting some beef tea, the roof was blown off, and he ran outside. As he did so he saw the whole hospital collapse. He commenced to run to the assistance of the patients but was lifted completely off his feet and fell to the ground some yards further on. As he was attempting to rise a stretcher caught him in the back and he was thrown down again. The patients had to be removed to shelter, however, and Private Gammon assisted to carry them on stretchers to the railway station and other places for shelter. This being accomplished, he, with six others, was placed on guard for the night. He sustained no injury during the cyclone, but lost all his belongings. Private Gammon was afterwards employed on an armoured train.

After a stay of three months in Kimberley, Private Tapsfield was sent to join General Settle's column, at Vryburg, and went with it to the relief of the garrison at Schweezer Reneke, which was surrounded. The next move was in the direction of Christiana, and thence to Boshof. The first fighting Private Tapsfield saw occurred at Lockoff, but not much damage was done. After the fight, he was left for eleven days in an empty house attending to two wounded men, one Briton and one Boer. During this time the Boers took possession of the town, and when they found Private Tapsfield they asked him his business. On being told that he was in charge of wounded men, they did all in their power to supply him with food and other necessaries for the patients and himself, and during the whole time he was there treated him with the utmost consideration. At the end of eleven days the wounded man was sufficiently recovered to be moved, and Private Tapsfield conveyed him in a Cape cart, supplied by the Boers, to Belmont, and thence by train to Kimberley. He rejoined General Settle's column at Edenburg, Orange River Colony, and went with it to Dewetsdorp, where the British had just sustained a reverse, and brought away the wounded, taking them to Bloemfontein. This was about Christmas time, and Private Tapsfield had made arrangements to have his Christmas dinner with the members of the first contingent stationed there, when the column suddenly received orders to move off again the day before Christmas, going in the direction of Victoria, and then right through Orange River Colony to the Transvaal, a fight taking place at Ooffmann's Drift, on the Vaal, one



THE THIRD SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT.

officer and fourteen men being wounded. The next day fighting recommenced, and during the morning the Boers put up a white flag. Stretchers were sent, and two wounded Boers brought in and taken to a farmhouse. Previous to this the women at the farm had been asked whether there were any men of the house fighting with the Boers, and they had replied in the negative. If they had had anyone the farm would have been burnt. On seeing one of the wounded men, however, one of the women exclaimed, "My son, my son!" thus showing that her previous statement was untrue. The contents of the house were consequently destroyed, but it was left standing, as one of the Boers was dying and the other just dead. Later in the same day the column was attacked, about thirty prisoners with two galloping maxims being taken by the Boers, while twelve men were killed and several wounded. After this the column went south to De Aar, where it was broken up, Private Tapsfield being sent to Worcester, Cape Colony, and afterwards to Rosmead, where he completed his service.

The Third Contingent.

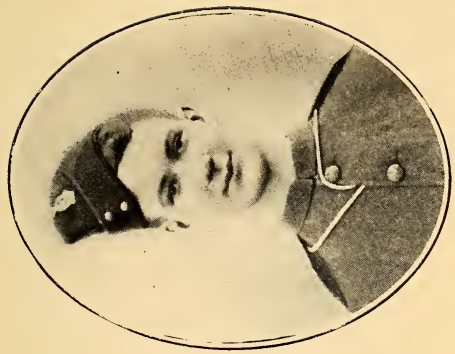
The third contingent consisted of Sergeant H. H. J. Clark, Corporal N. S. Abbott, Lance-corporal F. Gilbert, Privates W. S. F. Ellis, H. W. Crane, A. S. F. Brown, E. Kadwell, G. Tye, W. Moore, E. Samson, and H. H. Swift, and went to Aldershot on Easter Monday, 1900. There they received their active service equipment, and the whole contingent subsequently embarked at the Royal Albert Docks, London, on the s.s. "Ulstermore," which sailed on April 24th. At Cape Town they received orders to proceed to Port Elizabeth,

where they were transferred to the s.s. "Urmston Grange," and went on to Durban. Here the men were lowered by means of baskets into a tug to be landed, owing to the shallow nature of the harbour. At Durban the party received orders to proceed at once to Modder Spruit, just beyond Ladysmith. Private Ellis was detached from the party for duty at Estcourt, the remainder, with the exception of Corporal Abbott, joining No. 1 Field Stationary Hospital (afterwards No. 18 General) at Modder Spruit. They remained there for three months, when the whole Hospital was removed to Charlestown. Here Sergeant Clark was placed in charge of the steward's store, with Privates Kadwell and Brown as assistants. Lance-corporal Gilbert acted as day orderly wardmaster. Privates Tye, Swift, and Moore received appointments on the hospital staff, while Private Crane was placed in charge of the officers' ward. Private Samson was detailed for duty in the pack store. Private Swift was afterwards placed in charge of an enteric fever ward, and Sergeant Clark appointed chief wardmaster of the medical division, which comprised seven lines of tents, with eight tents to a line. Lance-corporal Gilbert served for four months with Colonel Poultney's column in the Eastern Transvaal.

Corporal Abbott was sent to Chieveley for a few days, and then on to Newcastle, where he was employed as clerk in the Principal Medical Officer's office, No. 4 Stationary Hospital. Corporal Abbott speedily proved his worth, and gave promise of a useful period of service in South Africa. This was not to be, however, for he unfortunately succumbed to enteric fever on July 24th,



THE LATE CORPORAL N. S. ABBOTT.



THE LATE PRIVATE G. H. CRITTENDEN.



1900, after a few months' service, being the first member of the Maidstone Company to give up his life for his country. A memorial stone was erected to his memory in the cemetery at Newcastle by the Company.

Private Ellis joined No. 7 General Hospital at Estcourt. After three months' duty there he contracted enteric fever and pneumonia, and was invalided home, being the first member of the Maidstone Company to return from the seat of war. He went on furlough for two months, and having completely recovered his strength, sailed on December 31st, 1900, for South Africa a second time. On arrival at Cape Town he was sent to Woodstock, where he was employed for two weeks in the Principal Medical Officer's office as clerk. At the end of that period he was ordered to join No. 5 Hospital Train for duty. A short description of a hospital train may here be given, as several members of the Maidstone Company were employed on those in use in South Africa. The trains were, of course, used for conveying the sick and wounded from the field hospitals to the base. They usually consisted of eight carriages, of which five were fitted with bunks for the patients to lie on, with a corridor down the centre as a means of access. Light and ventilation were obtained by means of skylights. In addition there was the cooking car, steward's store, etc. The personnel of No. 5 Hospital Train consisted of one major in command, one civil surgeon, two nursing sisters, one staff-sergeant, two corporals, two cooks, one orderly on the staff, and ten privates for duty. The train was sometimes preceded by an armoured train, and when in the fighting area only travelled by daylight. No. 5

Hospital Train was chiefly engaged in conveying sick and wounded from Deelfontein, De Aar, Naauwpoort, and towns in northern Cape Colony to the hospitals at Cape Town. Private Ellis was with the train twelve months, and during that time travelled over 45,000 miles. On leaving the train he acted as Commanding Officer's orderly at Wynberg, where he remained until he received orders to return to England. He received both the Queen's and King's South African War medals, with four clasps.

**The Fourth
Contingent.**

The fourth contingent left Maidstone on May 16th, 1900, for Aldershot. Their names and ranks were: Corporal E. P. Johnson, Lance-corporal A. W. J. Trafford, Privates L. A. Baker, F. J. T. Bevis, G. H. Sisley, W. R. Carr, W. D. Hills, H. J. Washford, P. Fairbrother, F. G. Payne, and A. H. Tiver. The career of this contingent as a corporate body, however, was soon brought to a conclusion, as at Aldershot they were detailed for duty during the voyage to South Africa on various troopships, and on arrival there did not again unite, being despatched to widely separated stations for duty.

Corporal Johnson, the senior non-commissioned officer of the party, was sent to the Model Schools Hospital, at Pretoria.

Lance-corporal Trafford was attached to No. 13 General Hospital, at Wynberg. He afterwards went with this Hospital to Elandsfontein, where he completed his service.

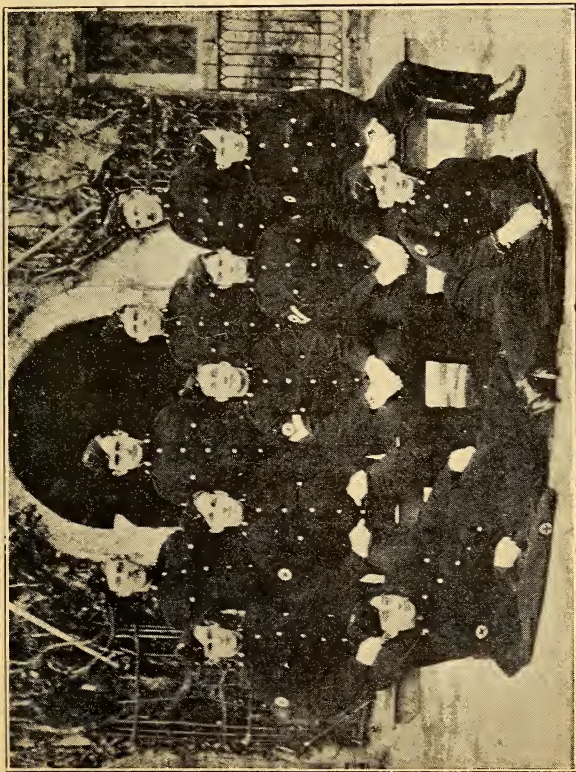


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THE FOURTH SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT.

Privates Baker and Hills were employed for the first month at Woodstock, Cape Town, whence they journeyed to Bloemfontein on No. 3 Hospital Train. No men being required there, they were sent on to Pretoria, the journey, which lasted three days and three nights, being accomplished on the top of truck-loads of coal. At Pretoria they were detailed for duty at No. 19 General Hospital, at the Model Schools, remaining there together about fourteen months. They returned home via Durban, having a luxurious journey to the coast in cattle trucks. An interesting memento of the stay of Privates Baker and Hills at Pretoria may be seen in the Privates' Mess at the Old Palace in the form of a framed piece of khaki cloth, upon which is tattooed a device of crossed Union Jacks, with the words: "Boer War, South Africa, 1899, 1900, 1901," in scroll-work, and under the flags the following verse:—

"Torn from a coat, we send to thee
This war-worn piece of 'Old Kharki';
With luck and friendship, from two alone,
To all 'old chums' and the Corps at home.

"From Privates Baker and Hills, Pretoria."

Private Bevis was sent from the "Details" at Woodstock to join the staff of No. 3 Hospital Train. His first journey was to Pretoria, from which town ninety sick and wounded were brought to Cape Town. It may be of interest to note that when the patients came on the train at Pretoria they were each supplied with a suit of pyjamas and various other articles presented by the British Red Cross Association. Each individual was then seen by the officer commanding, who gave his instructions as to treatment, diets, etc., for the journey. The

other routine on the train was much the same as that of an ordinary field hospital. The train continued to run between Cape Town and Pretoria for about six months, after which it commenced work in the Eastern Transvaal, conveying patients between the various hospitals, or picking up wounded from columns. While in this part of the country the train was sometimes preceded by several empty trucks pushed in front of the engine, to discharge any explosives which might be on the line. It was next employed in Natal, taking patients to Durban for embarkation on homeward bound ships. After a few months the train was again engaged in the Pretoria-Cape Town service, and was so employed when Private Bevis left it to return home, doing duty during the voyage in the hospital of the s.s. "Orotava." While with No. 3 Hospital Train Private Bevis travelled over 70,000 miles.

Private Tiver went to Middelburg (Transvaal), where he was employed in the orderly room during the whole period of his service. While there he sent home a photograph of Lord Kitchener and General Botha, with their respective staffs, who had met at Middelburg for the abortive peace conference. This photograph is of peculiar interest, as it was reported to have been freely circulated amongst the more ignorant Boer population as evidence that Lord Kitchener and his staff were prisoners in the hands of General Botha ! The photograph now hangs in the Privates' Mess at the Old Palace.

Private Payne served first at Greenpoint, where he commenced duty under the late Corporal Colvin. After five days there he went to Woodstock, and, in company

with Private Sisley, was ordered to Wellington, where they stayed six weeks, and then returned to Woodstock. Here Private Payne received orders to embark for duty on board a ship carrying Boer prisoners to Ceylon. Private Sisley at this time received news of his mother's death, and Private Payne, thinking a change would occupy his mind for a time, asked permission for him to go to Ceylon in his stead. This the authorities allowed, and Private Sisley sailed accordingly. Private Payne was next detailed for duty on No. 5 Hospital Train, upon which he was employed as assistant cook. The train started at first for Pretoria, but upon arrival at Karee Siding the line was found to be blown up, and it returned to Bloemfontein, and loaded with sick and wounded for Cape Town. The next journey was to Mafeking, which was reached one day after the great cyclone (August 31st, 1900). While at Bloemfontein a few weeks after this, Private Payne contracted ptomaine poisoning, and was in hospital fourteen days. During this time the train proceeded to Cape Town, and he never rejoined it. At this point it may be mentioned that Private Payne speaks very highly of the way in which the Colonials treated the patients on these trains whenever they stopped at Towes River or Wellington Stations, bringing them fruit, flowers, or delicacies at all hours of the day or night. Having spent a month at Bloemfontein, Private Payne was sent to the Artillery Barracks, Pretoria, for duty with a column, which proved to be the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, under General French. He joined the Brigade at Kalfontein, and it soon afterwards started on a great drive in the South-Eastern Transvaal, during which he

saw much fighting, especially at Bethel. During the march the column ran very short of supplies, and the men were put on half rations. When they arrived at Piet Rietief rain began to fall and continued almost incessantly for fourteen days. The camp was surrounded by five rivers, and owing to their swollen state no supplies could be obtained. The men therefore had to subsist for five weeks on one pound of mealie meal and one and a half pounds of meat per diem, at the end of which time the floods subsided and a convoy arrived. The Brigade then moved on towards Natal, passing through East Vryheid, Newcastle, and Dundee, finally arriving at Glencoe, Natal, thus completing the "drive." A few days were spent at Glencoe, and then the whole Brigade entrained for Springs, via Pretoria. At Springs the Brigade was re-equipped, and commenced operations in the Eastern Transvaal, ultimately arriving at Middelburg (Transvaal). A few days later the Brigade received orders to entrain for Rosmead, Cape Colony, as the discontented Dutch were giving trouble in that district, the journey, which was accomplished in coal trucks, occupying nine days. At Rosmead, the Brigade was broken up into several mobile columns, Private Payne staying at headquarters in charge of medical stores, and occasionally accompanying one of the columns as mounted orderly. He was thus occupied three months, after which he was sent to Naauwpoort for duty. He stayed there about two months, and then returned to England, having served one year 301 days. He received both the Queen's and King's South African War medals with five clasps.

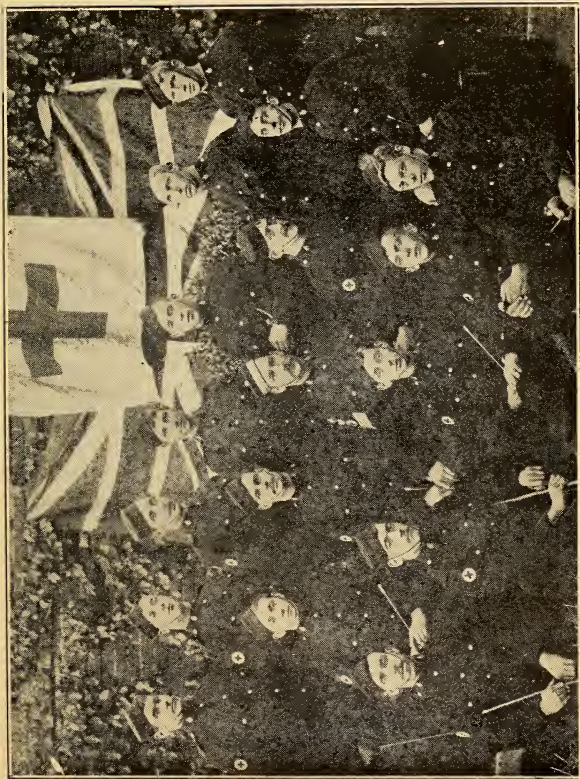


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THE FIFTH SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT.



Private Sisley, on returning from Ceylon, was detailed for duty on No. 5 Hospital Train, travelling mainly in Cape Colony, and remained with it until he returned home.

Private Carr was sent to join the 14th Brigade Field Hospital, with General Plumer's column, operating in the Eastern Transvaal, and was appointed lance-corporal. He remained with the column several months, and saw much fighting until, on August 10th, 1901, his spine was severely injured, and he was invalided home. The injury unfortunately proved of a permanent nature.

Private H. J. Washford was attached to No. 1 General Hospital, Wynberg, doing duty the whole time in the officers' ward. He was appointed special orderly to Brigadier-General Broadwood when that officer was an invalid at the hospital. Private Fairbrother was also sent to Wynberg, but he contracted enteric fever after a very short time, and was invalided home in December, 1900.

The Fifth Contingent.

The fifth contingent left Maidstone in June, 1900, and consisted of the following:—Staff-sergeant G. H. Fryer, Privates C. R. Jeffery, E. W. Bunyard, P. T. Bunyard, H. A. Fowle, N. Huggett, W. Longley, E. Cadic, O. Carpenter, F. H. Washford, L. Hadler, R. H. Reed, A. D. Shrimpton, A. B. Reynolds, G. Horton, W. Smith, and J. J. Curtis. On arrival in South Africa the whole contingent was posted to Wynberg, where they remained several months, being attached to

No. 13 General Hospital. The hospital was afterwards moved to Elandsfontein, near Johannesburg. The following Maidstone men went with it :—Staff-sergeant Fryer, Privates Longley, Smith, Curtis, Carpenter, F. H. Washford and P. T. Bunyard. Private Shrimpton remained at Wynberg, being transferred to No. 1 General Hospital. Private E. W. Bunyard did duty on Princess Christian's Hospital Train, and Private Cadic was attached to the hospital staff at Klerksdorp.

Privates Fowle, Huggett, and Jeffery joined Lord Methuen's column, and while with him saw fighting at Melopo Oog, and on the road from Ottoshoop to Lichtenburg, where Privates Fowle and Jeffery were left for duty. Private Huggett fell ill and was invalided home.

Private Reed was first employed at Wynberg, and afterwards sent to Beaufort West. Private Horton was with Private Tiver at Middelburg (Transvaal). Private Reynolds went to Standerton, where, as he was expecting to return home after a long period of service, he died of enteric fever.

Private Hadler had the most adventurous career of any member of the fifth contingent. His first three months in South Africa were spent on duty at Wynberg, after which he joined the 12th Brigade, under General Clements, at Reitfontein, and went with it to the Magaliesberg Mountains. At Nooitgedacht, after only four days with the Brigade, Private Hadler had his first experience of fighting. The whole of the camp was



THE LATE PRIVATE A. B. REYNOLDS.



THE LATE PRIVATE C. V. WAGHORN.



sleeping, with the exception of the sentries, when the Boers attacked in large numbers, being all round the camp and well under cover. The fight lasted all through the next day, the Boers finally capturing the camp and supplies. The Brigade retired on Reitfontein, fighting a rearguard action all the way. The representatives of the Royal Army Medical Corps, with their equipment, were left at Yeoman Hill, and for the next two days were engaged in collecting the wounded and burying the dead. This was not a very promising start for Private Hadler, as he lost the whole of his kit. The Brigade re-equipped at Reitfontein, and moved on to Buffalspoort, where General Cunningham took command. The next move was through Oliphant's Nek, and the night was spent at Middlefontein. At daybreak the Boers attacked, the fight being kept up all day, principally with artillery. The Brigade eventually got away without much loss, and continued its journey to Klerksdorp. The next engagement was at Modderfontein, the Boers being routed after six hours' fighting. Private Hadler was on duty that day in the dressing station. For the next three months the Brigade was engaged in the South-Western Transvaal, after which it was split up into several small columns, Private Hadler going with one under Colonel Dickson. The column went to Vlakfontein to search for some guns supposed to have been buried by the Boers, and while engaged in this work was attacked. The Boers managed to capture some guns belonging to the column, and turned them on to the British. Not much damage was done, however, for they did not know how to work the time-fuses, and not a shell exploded. The

guns were afterwards re-captured, after a magnificent charge by the infantry. This saved the situation, and the Boers were driven off. The column then retired, leaving fifteen members of the Royal Army Medical Corps to bring in the wounded and bury the dead. The Boers came up during the morning and rendered what assistance they could. Private Hadler was on duty almost continually for seven days and six nights. The wounded were conveyed to Krugersdorp in bitterly cold weather, the men of the Royal Army Medical Corps, in fact, giving up their great-coats as extra covering for the patients. Colonel Kekewich next took over the command of the column, which moved to Mafeking, and for the next six months was trekking in the Transvaal, but was not engaged in any very serious conflicts with the enemy. At the end of this period part of the column was encamped at Moedwill, and the remainder had gone into Rustenburg for provisions. While in this weakened state they were almost surrounded by Boers during the night, and had the enemy not been discovered when he was the camp must have fallen. The Boers, however, were seen by a corporal of the Yeomanry, who was visiting outposts. As he turned to gallop back and warn the camp he was fired at and killed, but this roused the camp, and after about two hours' hard fighting the Boers were repulsed. The wounded in this fight were taken to Rustenburg, and the column went to Klerksdorp, where Private Hadler was relieved and sent to Elandsfontein. A few days later he proceeded to Durban, and came home on the s.s. "Mohawk," doing duty in the hospital on the voyage.

The "Special Service" Men.

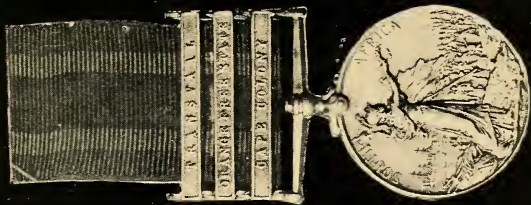
After the departure of the fifth contingent, no more men were sent from Maidstone during 1900; but the war was not over, and in the early part of 1901 the War Office request for men was repeated. The conditions under which these later parties enlisted were not so stringent as those prevailing in the first instance, and they were known as "Special Service" men. They were paid at a special rate, and many of them came from other parts of Kent and were specially enlisted into and trained by the Maidstone Company for service in South Africa. The great majority of these men were engaged in hospital duties, and a detailed description of their work is unnecessary. It will therefore be sufficient to record the places to which they were sent as far as these have been ascertained, and to say that they entirely upheld the high reputation gained for the Maidstone Company, Volunteer Medical Staff Corps, by the first contingents. "Special Service" men were recruited practically all through 1901 and the early part of 1902, and were sent to Aldershot in small parties. The following is a list of the men sent out by the Company under this heading, but does not include the names of a number of men specially trained but not entered on the rolls :—Privates F. L. Andrews, W. R. Arthur, A. G. Austin, J. Bailey, W. J. Baker, A. A. Baker, E. C. Bell, W. T. Benster, V. R. Betts, J. B. Biggs, W. H. Bowditch, B. J. Boorah, W. J. Bratton, L. Brigden, P. Burgess, W. G. Card, H. Carter, L. H. Chapman, S. S. Collins, S. W. Coveney, H. W. Cook, G. H. Crittenden, G. Dray, G. J. Dane, H. Davis, A. Fleming, A.

Fox, F. Gell, T. Grimes, H. H. Herbert, F. W. Harrison, W. A. Hill, E. H. Hollingworth, J. T. Hughes, A. W. Hunter, T. R. Hutton, A. H. Jermy, C. L. Knight, G. S. Kingsnorth, W. T. Leakey, T. Lewis, F. T. Longhurst, H. F. Longley, W. A. Lynn, C. Mitchell, Miller, C. W. Marchant, G. Mears, P. Palmer, A. W. Parker, A. F. Piper, sen., A. F. Piper, jun., J. E. Purrott, G. Richards, W. Richards, W. G. Sear, H. Sharp, G. F. Smeed, S. Seager, A. F. Sykes, W. J. Topley, F. W. Tart, Taylor, C. V. Waghorn, E. Walkling, F. E. Waterman, C. H. White, W. J. Wood, V. E. Woodhams, A. E. V. Wright, and Winchester.

Private Arthur made the voyage to South Africa in the s.s. "Harlech Castle." He landed at Cape Town, and was sent to Wynberg, proceeding thence to Elandsfontein, where he was attached to No. 20 General Hospital. Three weeks later he was ordered to join Colonel Colville's column at Greylingstad, in company with Private Andrews, who was taken ill after a few months with the column and invalided home, afterwards, however, returning to South Africa to complete his period of service. The column proceeded first across the Vaal River to Standerton, rearguard actions and sniping being every day occurrences. Private Arthur was appointed pay clerk to the hospital, a staff position he retained until the end of the war. For the next four months the column operated in the South-Eastern Transvaal, in the Standerton-Ermelo district, capturing small parties of Boers, with ammunition, cattle, etc. The column then went into Swaziland, but in the early part of 1902 was again in the Ermelo district. In March the



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column went via Laing's Nek into Natal, through Newcastle, and across the Buffalo River to Vryheid. Later it was again in the South-Eastern Transvaal, where it remained until the conclusion of the war. In July, 1902, Private Arthur went from Vryheid to Dundee, where he took his discharge, having elected to remain in South Africa.

Private W. J. Baker landed at Cape Town, and was at once sent up country to Bloemfontein, where he remained on duty several months. He next proceeded to Johannesburg and Standerton, and from the latter place went with Colonel Moody's sick convoy to Ermelo. He did duty there with the 20th Brigade Field Hospital, and later returned to Standerton, where he completed his service.

Privates A. A. Baker and Betts were together at No. 9 General Hospital, Bloemfontein. Private Betts was also attached to the Highland Brigade Bearer Company. Privates Bowditch and Biggs were with No. 17 General Hospital at Standerton. Private Bratton commenced duty at Wynberg, and was afterwards sent to Clan William. He was sent out on one occasion to assist in the removal of about thirty Cape Police after a severe fight in the vicinity.

Private Brigden was with No. 16 Stationary Hospital and on No. 10 Armoured Train in Cape Colony and Orange River Colony.

Privates Burgess, Longley, Lynn, and Hollingworth were together at Kroonstad. Private Longley was afterwards transferred to Johannesburg.

Privates Card, Collins, Carter, and Crittenden were sent to join No. 22 Bearer Company, with headquarters at Bethlehem, Orange River Colony, and each in turn went out with a column or convoy in that district, this being a much appreciated variation from the monotony of hospital duty. Private Crittenden unfortunately died of ulcerative enteritis. His funeral was attended by his comrades from Maidstone, and a cross was erected by the garrison over his grave in Bethlehem Cemetery.

Privates Coveney and Cook were both stationed at No. 11 General Hospital, Kimberley. Private Cook was one of the bearers sent out to collect the wounded after Lord Methuen's severe reverse at Krugersdorp.

Private Chapman was first stationed at Woodstock, where he was employed for several months as clerk in the office of the Principal Medical Officer. The work not proving congenial to him, he made repeated applications for a change, and this eventually came in the form of a voyage to Australia, he being detailed for duty in the hospital of the s.s. "Manchester Merchant." He spent three weeks in Sydney, and then returned to South Africa on the s.s. "Custodian." It may be mentioned that this vessel had on board the first Commonwealth Contingent, the first troops to sail from Australia after the amalgamation of the Colonies into a Commonwealth. On arrival in South Africa he was despatched to Pinetown, Natal, where he remained on duty for three months. He then went to Wynberg for a month and came home, doing duty during the voyage on the s.s. "Plassy."

Private Grimes landed at Durban and was first sent to Pinetown and later to Dundee, where he spent the

greater part of his time. Private Harrison was attached to No. 19 Stationary Hospital. Private Hughes landed at Durban and joined No. 20 General Hospital at Elandsfontein. Private Marchant was with No. 1 General Hospital, Pretoria, where, on the completion of the war, he was discharged, and joined the Pretoria Civil Police. Private Miller was with the 19th Brigade Bearer Company. Private Knight relieved Private Ellis on No. 5 Hospital Train.

Private Longhurst was stationed at Pretoria, and Privates Sear, W. Richards, A. F. Piper, jun., and G. Richards at Middelburg, Transvaal.

Private Parker was employed during the first portion of his service at Elandsfontein, and later proceeded to Standerton, whence he was once sent on special duty to Pietermaritzburg. He completed his service at No. 17 General Hospital, Elandsfontein.

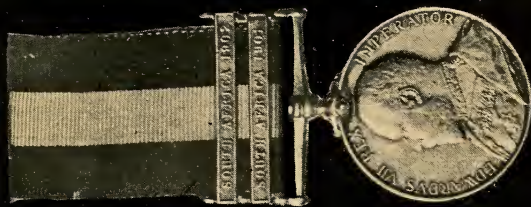
Private A. F. Piper, sen., was at Machadodorp, and Private Sharp at Bloemfontein with No. 8 General Hospital, while Private Purrott was stationed at Newcastle. Private Topley was on duty at Howick and Pinetown, and Privates Wood and Winchester were with No. 18 General Hospital at Charlestown.

Private Waghorn was for several months on duty at Wynberg, where he unfortunately contracted enteric fever, and succumbed on July 19th, 1902.

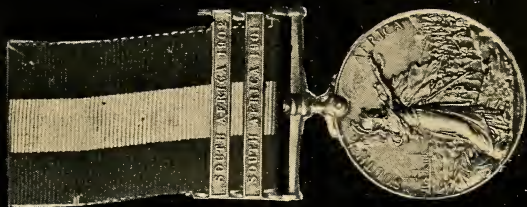
Private Waterman was with No. 14 General Hospital in Natal, and Privates White and Taylor at Bloemfontein. Private Wright went to Wynberg, but was invalided home after a few months' service. Private Bailey was on duty at Elandsfontein.

Private Walkling was stationed at No. 1 General Hospital, Wynberg, being on duty in the Boer Ward during the visit of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York in the course of their historic tour round the world in the s.s. "Ophir." He afterwards joined Private Woodhams at the 4th Brigade Field Hospital, stationed at Frankfort and Heilbron.

Private Seager was fortunate enough to be sent up country soon after his arrival in South Africa, going to Bloemfontein. There he was attached to the Oxford Light Infantry as orderly, and went with them to Poplar Grove, where a small Field Hospital was established. Private Seager did eight weeks' duty in this hospital, and then returned to Bloemfontein. A week later he was ordered to join a section of the 20th Brigade Field Hospital with Colonel Bethune's column at Wanderfontein. The first fighting he saw occurred at Witkop, but was not of a very serious character. The column then went into Zululand, entraining at Harrismith for Stanger. The country through which they now had to pass was very hilly, and large numbers of mules were lost daily through over-work. The column halted for three days at Eschowe. While they were there a battle was in progress at Itala, and the column was ordered to assist, but the mules were found to be unfit to proceed. The column remained in the vicinity for a few days and then returned to Stanger, where they stayed two months, owing to the fact that nearly all the column were attacked with a fever common in those parts. The whole column then proceeded by train to Kroonstad, and Private Seager was sent to Lindley, where he remained



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one month, when the Bearer Section was broken up and he went with his half-section to Doornkloof. He was at Doornkloof when peace was proclaimed, and saw the rockets go up from the blockhouses for miles around. He was retained for duty some three months after this, however, when he was sent to Pretoria, and returned home via East London.

Such, in a very brief and summarised form, is the record of the work of the members of the Maidstone Companies, Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers), who served in South Africa during the Boer War, and who did their share towards proving to the world for all time that the British Volunteers in all branches of the service are a force to be reckoned with in times of national emergency. The work they were called upon to perform was often of a most monotonous and depressing nature, especially in the case of men employed at small, detached stations; but wherever their duty lay, whether accompanied by the excitement of life on a column or the dreary routine of hospital duty, it was always willingly and cheerfully performed, with the consciousness that they were doing all that lay in their power to alleviate the suffering inevitably connected with a great war. The able manner in which they performed their duties, also, showed beyond a doubt what excellent material there was in the Volunteers only waiting an opportunity to prove its worth, and there is no doubt that, should occasion arise, the present and future members of the Maidstone Companies, Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers), will respond in an equally ready and willing manner to their country's call.





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